



NEWS PAGE 3

THE 'SAFE' CARS THAT CAN KILL

IN THE TABLOID

FASHION: THE FRILL OF IT ALL

IN THE TABLOID

BRADEN: THE FRILL OF IT ALL

NEW SECTION WITH 50 PAGES OF OFFICE, LEGAL AND BANKING APPOINTMENTS

City bets on a tough Budget

Diane Coyle and Anthony Bevin

Share prices soared and the pound fell back from its five-year highs yesterday as the financial markets concluded that today's Budget would be tough enough to reduce the need for higher interest rates.

The FTSE 100 index leapt more than 23 points to 4,728.0, its second biggest one-day rise on record. It was the largest gain in prices since the recovery from the 1987 crash.

Meanwhile the pound slipped back from its overnight high of DM2.91 to end at just under DM2.89. Its index against a range of currencies fell by 0.5 to 101.6.

Pre-Budget speculation that the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, will deliver tax increases designed to dampen the budding consumer boom accounted for the stockmarket euphoria, analysts said. This would reduce the pressure on the Bank of England to cool the economy by increasing base rates again.

Steve Wright, at BZW, said: "This was the last thing you'd expect before a Labour Budget." But the market was reacting to rumours that Mr Brown would target consumers with higher taxes, he said.

Many experts have been calling on the Chancellor to get tough in his first Budget because rising interest rates have helped drive the pound to an uncomfortably high level.

But even as the financial markets concluded the "loot" Chancellor would live up to his reputation by targeting the housing market and raising "green" and "sin" taxes, Britain's biggest mortgage

leader warned that the housing market was not booming.

The Halifax reported that house prices climbed 0.7 per cent last month, to a level 7.1 per cent higher than a year ago. This was far tamer than separate figures from the Nationwide building society. The Halifax said: "There is no need for any specific Budget measures aimed at curbing an al-

New Labour, new despatch box

Gordon Brown has banished the battered old red Gladstonian box that has been used by Chancellors on Budget day for more than a century. He yesterday received the gift of a brand new red leather-lined, hand-finished box made by three young apprentices from the Babcock training programme at Rosyth Royal Dockyard in Fife - who were only told a few days ago what the box was for.

legedly "booming" housing market."

The latest business survey yesterday, of purchasing managers in manufacturing, suggested that the strong pound has not yet harmed output or exports. But it has almost certainly hit profit margins on exports.

Peter Thomson, director general of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, said: "It is encouraging that exports have not yet been hit by the pound. What is left of British industry is a good deal more efficient than it used to be."

But Robert Barrie, chief economist at BZW, said: "Right across the economy profit mar-

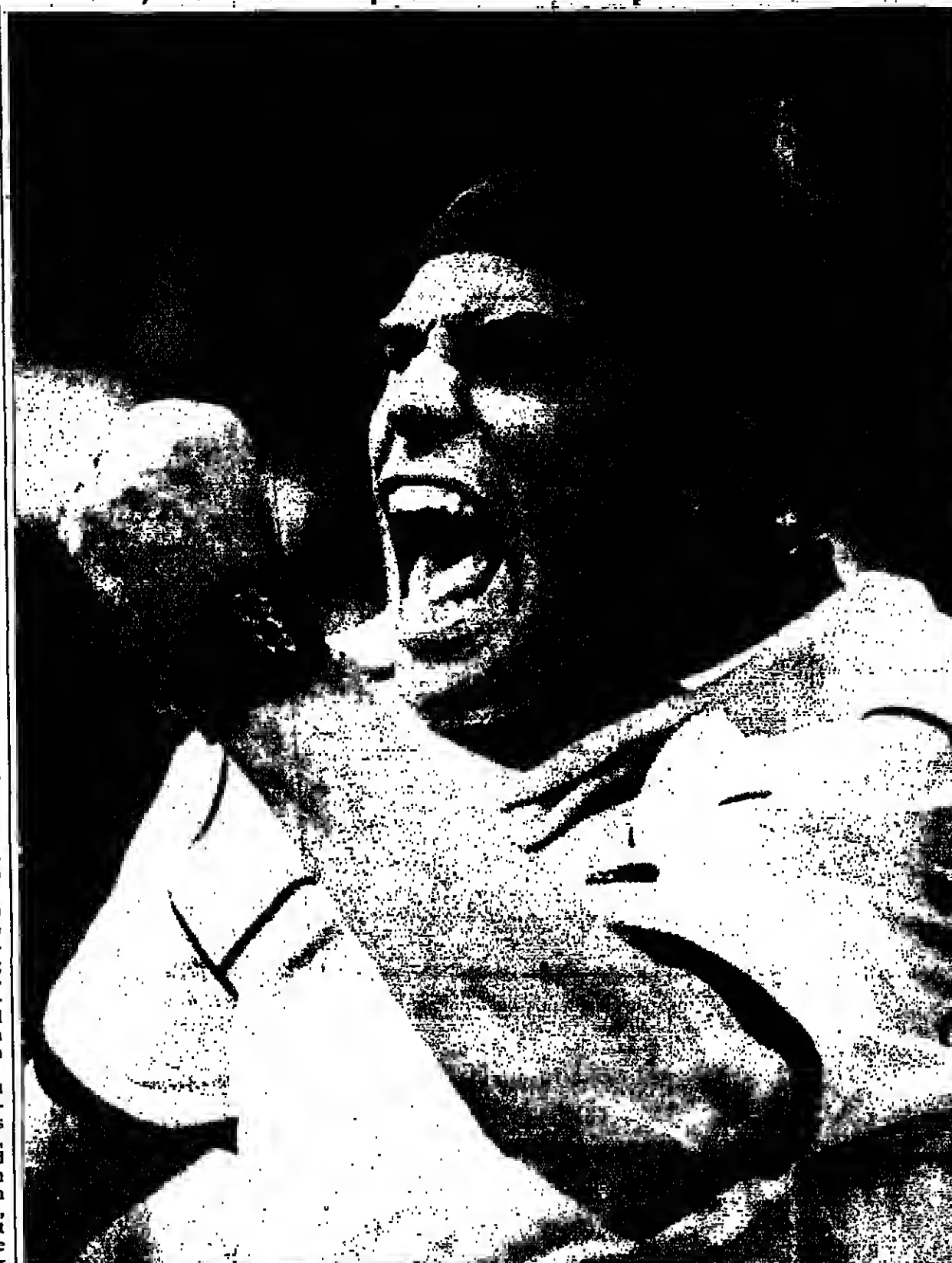
gins are under pressure. Companies are finding it hard to make money." Relief from the strong pound was urgently needed, he warned.

Most economists have been predicting modest tax increases, amounting to less than £5bn, on top of the windfall tax on privatised utilities. Yesterday these expectations had clearly been revised up, with the City now expecting a rise in the tax burden big enough to make a material difference to the interest rate outlook. Analysts warned that the markets would fall in an equally dramatic fashion if these expectations were disappointed. "The stockmarket would be very disappointed if Gordon Brown doesn't deliver," said Mr Wright.

Peter Lilley, shadow Chancellor, told BBC Radio 4's *World at One*: "The only reason Gordon Brown wants to have a Budget now is to raise taxes so that he can tax more oow to spend more later. That was always their plan. It has nothing to do with the state of the economic cycle and it's a mere pretence to cover up the age-old tradition of Labour coming in and raising taxes so they can spend more."

The Opposition parties' main pre-Budget challenge was concentrated on the Government's Welfare to Work programme, and the windfall tax that would be used to finance it. Stephen Dorrell, Tory spokesman on education and employment, challenged the Government view that the scheme to provide training opportunities for 250,000 under-25s could become self-financing, once it had been given a kick-start from windfall tax revenues.

Game, set and quarter-final place to Briton



Greg Rusedelski celebrates after powering his way into the quarter-finals at Wimbledon yesterday, beating Richey Reneberg in straight sets. The adopted Briton served 32 aces and wiped the American off the court in less than two hours with a score of 7-6 6-4 7-6, and said he was determined to go all the way to the final. "It feels great to be in the quarter-finals but I don't want to stop here," he said.

Photograph: Henk Koster/Professional Sport

Higher tea prices in the bag

Alexandra Williams

A recycled teabag from yesterday's breakfast is not every one's cup of tea. But with the price of a British cuppa set to soar, many may sacrifice the perfect brew and resort to just that.

A staggering 185 million cups are drunk every day - more than the combined amount of coffee and soft-drink consumption, but yesterday a UN food agency warned consumers that droughts in tea-producing countries will mean price increases.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome said the dry weather in Sri Lanka and many African countries has caused a 37-per-cent drop in production in the first quarter of this year.

With demand expected to remain stable, prices will inevitably rise, it said.

Tea broker Tony Kane, of Wilson Smith, said: "If the cost of tea on the supermarket shelves was going to reflect the price increase of raw tea you'd be looking at a 20- to 25-per-cent rise."

"But if there's going to be a whack-up in price then it won't be for a few months."

Britain imports 150,000 tons of tea a year to satisfy the 77 per cent of the population who drink it daily.

Twenty countries produce tea, although Britain imports more than half from Kenya alone.

But Sarah Ward, a Tea Council spokeswoman, said British companies would be prepared to go to other countries for supplies. She said: "In an average teabag there are 35 different blends of tea. The job of a blender is to maintain quality without compromising the price - it's quite an art."

"Tea companies will have anticipated the problem and looked elsewhere. They will be keeping an eye on China and India's production."

Van Den Bergh Foods, which accounts for a fifth of the UK tea market, supplying companies such as Brooke Bond, said it was far too early in the year to evaluate how it would hit the consumer.

Spokesman Duncan Bogie said: "We are used to fluctuations in the raw materials - it's quite common. It will take some time to appraise the full implications of the droughts in Sri Lanka and Africa."

The announcement follows news of a rise in the cost of coffee. Extreme cold weather hit production in Brazil this year, forcing producers to relocate entire coffee plantations to warmer areas.

A frenzy of buying by speculators forced prices up to a 20-year high. Inevitably the consumer paid the price, with Nestlé, for example, putting the price of its 100g jar of Gold Blend up by 17p to £2.54.



INSIDE

Woman 'invented killer'
A woman stabbed her fiancé to death after a ferocious argument and then invented a "mystery murdering motorist" who had killed him in a road-rage attack, a court was told. Page 8

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Why John Major didn't go to Hong Kong

Steve Boggan

John Major could have been in Hong Kong but, for him, there was no competition. If saying goodbye to Britain's last colony of significance meant not saying goodbye to Denis Compton, his boyhood cricketing hero, then Hong Kong could wait.

The former Prime Minister was one of 2,000 friends, families and faithful who turned up at Westminster Abbey in London yesterday to say that goodbye and to remember the skill, grace and flamboyance that thrilled a generation of cricket lovers.

"To watch Denis Compton play cricket on a good day was to know what joy was," said Mr Major. "I could have been in Hong Kong. But I think I made the right choice."

It was the sort of choice being made more often these days by the former Prime Minister. Immediately after his general election defeat, Mr Major chose to go to Lord's instead of presiding over his party's disarray. And many commentators are already predicting that his memoirs will distance him further from those he will say alienated the voters.

Compton, who died on 23 April -

Saint George's Day - at the age of 78, is the first cricketer to be given a memorial service at Westminster Abbey.

And not since the service for the broadcaster Richard Dimbleby in 1966 was a celebration of life so oversubscribed. More than a thousand applicants had their request for tickets turned down.

Those who made it came from all walks of life and spanned several generations. Keith Miller, 77, Compton's old Australian adversary, hobbled in on crutches; Sir Colin Cowdrey was there, talking of the man who brought sunshine to the dark post-war years; and JJ Warr, former president of the Marylebone Cricket Club, told how effortlessly the genius astonished those who came to see his flair on the football field for Arsenal and his panache between the wickets for Middlesex.

"In the last weeks of his life, a comet appeared in the skies over Britain," said Mr Warr in a gently irreverent, but warmly-received address. "Compton was a comet in his own right. Wherever he went, he cast brilliance in the sporting firmament."

The outpouring of goodwill took Compton's family by surprise. Richard, 41, his son from the second of three



Best of enemies: Keith Miller, the former Australian all-rounder, mourns his old adversary at Westminster Abbey. Photograph: Brian Harris

marriages flew over from his South African home to attend.

"I didn't live with Dad for most of my life, so it's very moving for me to see the regard in which he is still held over here," he said. "It is a tribute to the British people that they have remembered him so well."

Compton played cricket 78 times for England, scoring 38,942 runs - an av-

erage of 51.85. He also played on the left-wing for Arsenal, winning championship and FA Cup medals and earning 14 caps for England.

"He was unique," said Sir Colin Cowdrey. "Everything he did was effortless, yet, despite his brilliance, he never displayed any arrogance whatsoever."

"After the war, there were a few priceless people - like him and Vera

Lynn - who brought us back to our senses and taught us how to smile again."

After the service, whose congregation ranged from Lords Archer and Runcie to the comedian Jimmy Tarbuck, the air was thick with Compton anecdotes. Of his notoriously bad timekeeping and disorganisation. Of the times he would turn up to play for England wearing the dinner jacket from last night's party. Of his smiling face everywhere advertising Brylcreem - in spite of his conspicuous absence from his kit bag.

"This has been a great honour for him," said his widow, Christine. "I knew he was regarded as a big sporting favourite, but I had no idea that he was this big. He would have loved it."

Aside from the cricketing records, there may be another Compton legacy: Richard Compton's son Nicholas. The 14-year-old has inherited his grandfather's passion for cricket and captains his year's cricket team at Hilton College in Durban.

"His says he wants to come to England to play," said Richard Compton. "And if he's anything like his grandfather there'll be no stopping him."



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news

significant shorts

Editor hopes to make the 'Sun' shine on Merseyside

The Sun newspaper said yesterday that it had approached the victims of the Hillsborough tragedy to try to end the long-running enmity towards the newspaper in Merseyside. Stuart Higgins, the paper's editor, confirmed that he had approached the chairman of the Hillsborough Family Support Group, Trevor Hicks, to set up talks.

The Sun lost sales of around 200,000 copies a day after the paper was boycotted in protest at its coverage of the 1989 stadium disaster. Its sales are still believed to be down by more than 120,000 copies, eight years later.

Under a banner headline which read "The Truth", the Sun claimed that the crush that caused the 96 deaths at the Leppings Lane end of Hillsborough Stadium was caused by Liverpool fans who had been drinking before the match. The story also claimed that some Liverpool fans stole from the pockets of the dead and urinated on policemen trying to rescue them.

Mr Hicks said yesterday that the Sun might make a donation to the Hillsborough Justice Fund to make amends for the article. "The Truth" was written while Kelvin Mackenzie, who later admitted the story was a mistake, was editor of the newspaper. Mr Mackenzie is now managing director of cable television channel Live TV, owned by Mirror Group, a shareholder in The Independent. Paul McCann

Freak weather takes toll on birds

More than 100,000 baby birds have been killed because of freak weather conditions at an internationally important breeding site, the RSPB said yesterday. The chicks - mainly kittiwakes and some guillemots - have been washed out of their nests in cliffs at Bempton, near Flamborough Head, East Yorkshire, by gales and driving rain.

The RSPB estimates that more than 100,000 kittiwakes out of about 130,000 that have been born this year have perished. At least 90 per cent of about 8,000 guillemots bred in the colony are also thought to have died.

RSPB spokesman Chris Harbord described the loss as a "huge tragedy" for Bempton, which has been a successful seabird breeding colony for hundreds of years.

If the storms had struck just a few weeks later it is likely the birds, which were up to three weeks old, would have survived because many would have been able to fly.

Marsh faces crown court trial

The former world light-welterweight boxing champion Terry Marsh was sent for trial at crown court yesterday, charged with attempting to dishonestly obtain a student grant.

Marsh, 39, from Basildon, Essex, who stood down as a Liberal Democrat candidate at the general election, appeared at Thames Magistrates Court in London, answering unconditional bail. The charge alleges that he lied about his academic qualifications in a student grant application.

He was committed for trial at Southwark Crown Court in London and remanded on unconditional bail by magistrates. Two previous charges of deception involving £9,000 relating to student grants were dropped.

Reporting restrictions were not lifted.

Bullying inquiry in Western Isles

Government inspectors are to visit a school in the Western Isles which has been at the centre of serious bullying allegations. The Scottish education minister, Brian Wilson, yesterday announced that a special inspection would be carried out at the Nicolson Institute in Stornoway.

The school was in the news recently when a pupil, 14-year-old Katherine Jane Morrison, committed suicide after being bullied by two fellow pupils, Lee Anne Murray and Michelle McBratney, both of whom were later sent to a detention centre for three months.

Earlier this month, Western Isles Council announced that a wide-ranging review of the management of the Nicolson Institute would be carried out.

people



Ship to shore: Tracy Edwards and her team have braved cruel seas on their long voyage

Tracy's all-woman crew cruise into record books

International yachtswoman Tracy Edwards's racing catamaran was yesterday expected to set a new transatlantic speed sailing record for a vessel crewed entirely by women.

The 92ft Royal and Sun Alliance was due to cross the finishing line off the Lizard, Cornwall, last night. She was then expected to sail straight back to Plymouth, Hants, and is set to arrive this afternoon.

Light and variable winds sank her attempt to beat the French-held "all-women" speed record. But, as the first all-female crew to take on the 2,925 nautical mile speed challenge, their time will stand as the mark to beat.

The catamaran, which set off from New York on Sunday last week, was chasing Serge Madec's 1990 time of six days, 13 hours and 20 minutes.

The transatlantic crossing is the first of three voyages by the 10 women - all firsts by an all-female crew. In August they will attack the Round Britain and Ireland sailing record of five days, 21 hours and five minutes.

And in December they will take part in the Jules Verne Round the World trophy challenge.

During her latest voyage, Ms Edwards described the hardships she and the crew were facing, on the same waters which had claimed the Titanic.

She said on a ship-to-shore call: "The weather is pretty horrendous. It is five degrees below freezing with the wind right on the nose, making the boat toss around or shudder through the waves. Just when you think you have got your balance, it pitches. There are a few bumps and bruises and several of us are feeling pretty queasy."

"Everyone is drenched to the skin and having to sleep fully clothed, so that they can be ready to deal with icebergs. When you see them on radar it's worse than seeing them for real, because as you hurtle through the blackness your imagination works overtime."

However, despite the discomfort, Ms Edwards said her international crew had been "fantastic". She added: "All that matters is the weather, the sea, and what you are doing on board at the time."

Blind student's double first at Cambridge

The admissions authorities at Cambridge University were sceptical when Nikhil Nair, blind since the age of nine, applied to take a chemistry degree. Three years on, the university's first ever blind science student has gained the top first class honours degree in his subject at Trinity College, and one of the highest firsts overall.

Nikhil, 21 (right), who also scooped two university prizes and will return to Cambridge in the autumn to begin a research degree in quantum chemistry, astonished tutors with his resourcefulness in overcoming his disability.

He revised lecture notes from a computer with the aid of a Braille synthesiser and voice box, and was able to "read" diagrams drawn by tutors in blunt pencil on acetate film. In the lab, only experiments with the most dangerous chemicals were out of bounds.



With four A grades at A-level and the determination to apply, Nikhil was ideally qualified, according to his personal tutor, Dr Hugh Hunt. "He has been fantastic and we are absolutely delighted."

Fellow students have grown used to the sight of Nikhil speeding around the quads and stairways at a smart pace. "I decided I could walk slowly and not bump into anything or I could walk at a pace I wanted and have the occasional collision. I chose the latter," Nikhil said.

DJ Caesar jailed for deception

Caesar the Geezer, Capital Radio's controversial "shock jock" DJ, who resigned suddenly last month, claiming he had stomach cancer, was sentenced yesterday to 15 months imprisonment.

He was sentenced under his real name, Chris Ryder, at Chelmsford Crown Court after pleading guilty to five charges of breaking the law relating to undischarged bankrupts, and for breaching a 1993 suspended sentence for obtaining property by deception.

Ryder, 40, pleaded guilty to obtaining a car on credit without declaring he was a bankrupt.

A spokeswoman for Capital Radio said yesterday that the station had believed Mr Ryder was seriously ill when he resigned.

He was originally with Talk Radio, when that station sought a controversial image and had been at Capital for a year.

His agent, David Ham, said the sentence was "totally inappropriate".

briefing

EDUCATION

'Most dilapidated school' wins share of £37m fund

A crumbling primary school, once dubbed the most dilapidated in Britain, yesterday learned it is among 200 schools to share in £37m released by the Government for repairs and renewal.

The Independent reported earlier this year how staff and parents at Weeting Primary in Norfolk lobbied their local MP, the then secretary of state for education and employment, Gillian Shephard, to act over the condition of the thatched schoolhouse and surrounding mobile classrooms, where the children have to attend classes wrapped in anoraks during the winter.

Norfolk County Council will be able to spend almost £1m on building a replacement school, the schools minister Stephen Byers announced yesterday.

The Ridings School in Halifax, briefly shut down amid a discipline crisis last autumn, will also receive a £650,000 handout to fund an arts suite. The poor standard of the school's buildings had been blamed as a factor in its troubles.

Lucy Ward

AGRICULTURE

Deaths on the farm hit new high

The number of people killed on farms rose by 40 per cent to hit a six-year high this year, according to official figures published yesterday. A total of 63 deaths, including eight children, was recorded in the 12 months to April - up from 45 the year before.

The biggest rise in fatalities was among self-employed farmers - levels were higher than at any time since new reporting methods were introduced in 1986.

A breakdown of the accidents shows that falling led to most deaths, accounting for 12 fatalities. Other major causes of death were being trapped by something collapsing or overturning, and being hit by a moving vehicle. Five people drowned or were asphyxiated, four were injured by animals and one was killed in a fire.

FINANCE

New rules for banks and lenders

Two new codes of practice for banks and mortgage lenders, aimed at giving the public a better deal, came into force yesterday. The voluntary codes give customers new rights, set out minimum standards and make clear the responsibilities that banks, building societies and mortgage lenders have to their customers.

All the major banks and societies have signed up to the new codes, and copies of the rules are available at branches. Both codes feature a list of general "commitments" and a number of specific promises relating to issues such as what happens when people get into financial difficulty, as well as interest rates, mortgage advice, dealing with complaints and confidentiality.

The new Banking Code includes several amendments to the old code, while the Mortgage Code lays down a "benchmark" set of minimum standards which lenders will follow, and also introduces a new framework for the selling of mortgages.

CAREERS

Bright prospects for arts graduates

Arts and humanities graduates fare just as well in the job market as those on more vocational degree courses, according to research published today. Their employment prospects immediately after graduation differ little from those graduating in physical science and engineering.

After four years, 95 per cent are either working or in further study, compared with 92 per cent of physical science graduates and 97 per cent of engineers. The average for all subjects is 97 per cent.

Six months after graduating, classics offers the lowest unemployment rate, followed by music, history, theology and linguistics. Graduates with accounting and business studies degrees find it harder, at this stage, to get jobs.

The report, from the Council of University Deans of Arts and Humanities and the Council for Industry and Higher Education, aims to counter suggestions that employers are unwilling to take on arts graduates.

Judith Judd

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Belgium	£1.40	Italy	£1.50
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Czech Rep.	£1.20	Mali	£1.50
Denmark	£1.40	Norway	£1.50
Finland	£1.40	Portugal	£1.50
France	£1.40	Spain	£1.50
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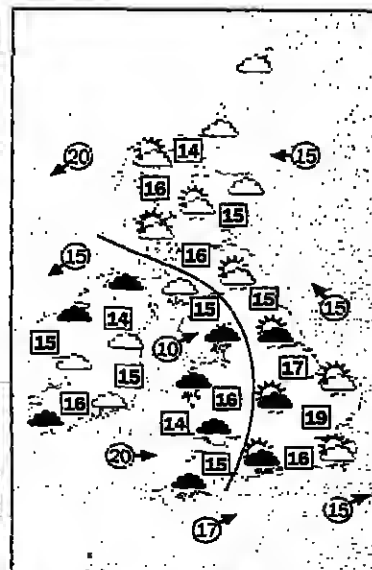
BACK ISSUES

Back issues of the Independent are available from: Historic Newspapers, telephone 01988 843370.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

WEATHER



The British Isles

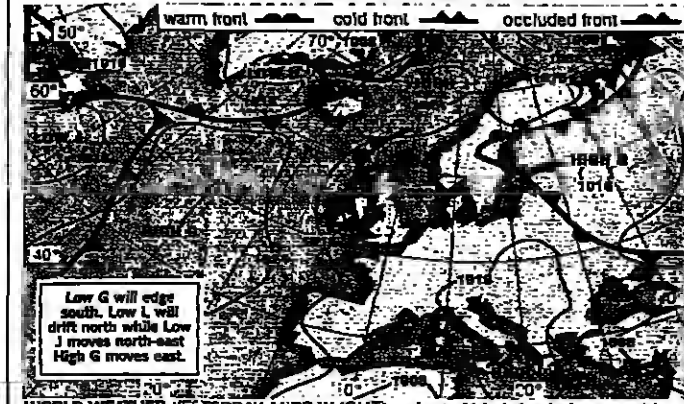
General Situation and Outlook

Scotland will start cloudy and damp with some patchy rain. During the day it should slowly brighten up with the best of the sun along the north-west coast, but occasional showers are also likely, and persistent rain will never be far away from the south-west. Northern Ireland, Wales and western England will be cloudy and grey with spells of rain. Eastern and south-eastern England should start dry with a little sunshine, but a few scattered heavy showers will develop. Tomorrow, England and Wales should see a little sunshine, but it will be another cloudy day with scattered heavy showers. Northern Ireland and Scotland will also have a lot of cloud and some showers, but the far north may stay dry. On Friday the showers will be mainly over England and Wales with the best of the dry weather in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The weekend should be drier, brighter and warmer in most places, but patchy rain will spread slowly south through Scotland later.

Aberdeen	12	54	Carlsberg	10	50
Anglesey	12	54	Cork	11	52
Belfast	10	50	Dover	13	55
Birmingham	16	61	Edinburgh	10	50
Blackpool	13	55	Exeter	14	57
Bournemouth	18	64	Glasgow	11	52
Brighton	17	63	Guernsey	16	61
Bristol	15	59	Inverness	10	50
Cardiff	14	57	Isle of Wight	15	59

Isle of Wight	13	55	Plymouth	12	54
Jersey	11	52	Ronalds	12	54
London	13	55	Scarborough	13	55
Lincoln	11	52	Shrewsbury	13	55
Liverpool	13	55	Southampton	16	61
Manchester	16	61	St Andrews	11	52
Nottingham	13	55	Stirling	11	52
Oxford	13	55	Stornoway	11	52
Perth	11	52	Tiree	10	50
Portsmouth	16	61	Yarmouth	12	54

Europe and The World



World Weather Yesterday, Midday (GMT): cloudy; light fog; heavy mist; rain; snow; sunny; thunder; previous day's figure at local time.					
Athens	22	72	Florence	24	75
Auckland	15	59	Frankfurt	17	63
Bangkok	32	90	Geneva	19	68
Barcelona	22	72	Gibraltar	23	73
Belarus	28	84	Helsinki	27	81
Belgrade	25	77	Hong Kong	28	82
Berlin	18	64	Honolulu	28	82
Bombay	31	88	Islamabad	28	82
Buenos Aires	17	63	Istanbul	20	73
Bucharest	22	72	Jerusalem	31	88
Budapest	22	72	Jo'burg	9	49
Cairo	33	91	Kuala Lumpur	34	93
Canberra	18	64	London	13	55
Cape Town	18	64	Los Angeles	20	73
Christchurch	18	64	Luxembourg	18	61
Copenhagen	18	64	Madrid	22	72
Corfu	28	82	Malaga	25	79
Darwin	30	86	Melbourne	18	64
Dhaka	42	108	Moscow	22	72
			New York	22	72
			Nice	21	70
			Nicosia	31	88
			Paris	16	61
			Prague	18	64
			Rangoon	28	82
			Rhodes	27	81
			Rio de Jan	25	78
			Riyadh	34	104
			Rome	23	73
			Sydney	25	77
			Taipei	25	77
			Tokyo	24	75
			Valencia	24	75
			Yamou	24	75
			Washington	28	82

AA Roadwatch

London, A11 Leytonstone. Lane closures at A12 roundabout until August 1999.
London, A30 Hemmetsworth Bridge. Closed until January 1998.
Surrey, M25 J8-10. Lane closures both ways.
Bristol, M5 J18-19. Contraflow on Avonmouth Bridge until August 1998.
Swansea, A483 Fabian Way. Lane closures both ways until July 98.
Staffordshire, A50 Stoke On Trent. Major works at Mersey. Roadworks at Killingworth.
Leicestershire, A6 Lockington. Contraflow near M1 J24. West Midlands, A41 Wolverhampton. Roadworks on station Road until further notice.
Greater Manchester, A627 Bury. Temp lights on Ashton Rd.
Merseyside, A567 Bootle. Stanley Rd closed northbound until further notice.
Tyne & Wear, A19 Newcastle. Roadworks on Gateshead Road until further notice.
West Yorks, M1 J47. Major long-term roadworks until Sept 15.
North Yorks, A19 Thirsk. Roadworks.
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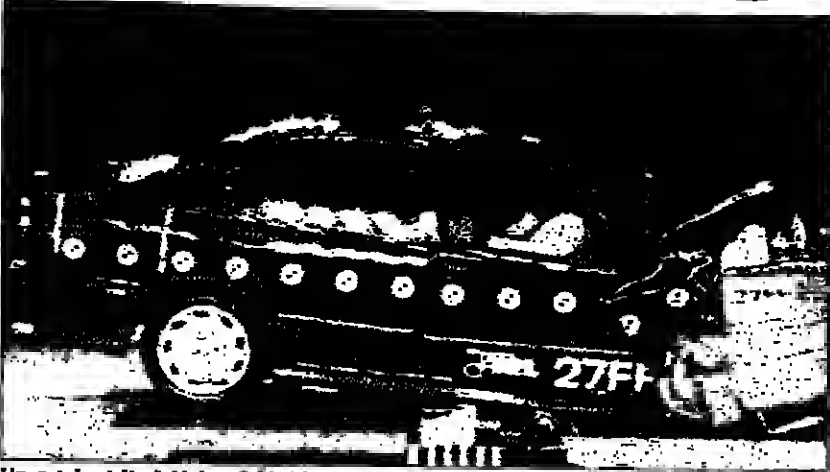
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صكنا من الامم

The high road to disaster...



Up against it: A Volvo S40 (the only car awarded a four-star safety rating), a Mercedes-Benz C Class and Rover 600 (both rated with two stars) being tested under crash conditions at the Transport Research Laboratory yesterday

Tests show that even 'safe' cars can kill

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

Some of Britain's best-selling family saloon cars do not protect their occupants from serious injury in road accidents, according to the results of official European crash protection tests out yesterday.

Thirteen popular models were smashed into deformable walls to simulate crash conditions at the Transport Research Laboratory. Two main tests were conducted to gauge the protection cars gave to occupants and pedestrians in the event of front and side-impact crashes.

Only one car, the Volvo S40, was awarded a four-star rating in the tests – the highest possible under the Euro New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP) ratings. Five cars got three stars – the Ford Mondeo, Vauxhall Vectra, Volkswagen Passat, Nissan Primera and Renault Laguna.

The results showed that some expensive marques did not offer greater protection from injury. The £20,000 Mercedes C-class only received two stars as did the £17,000 BMW 3-Series.

The Mercedes, which is currently being redesigned, did particularly badly in the side-impact test – where a car is rammed from the side by a collapsible barrier at 30mph. According to researchers, when the test took place with the Mercedes "the [driver's] door struck the dummy's chest before the side airbag had fully inflated".

Edmund King, head of campaigns at the RAC, said the tests showed "price alone was no guide to how well protected a driver and passengers are. The lesson is the consumer cannot judge a car's safety on the price, manufacturer's reputation or advertising."

Other cars which only scored two stars included the Rover 600, Audi A4, Citroen Xantia, Saab 900 and Peugeot 406. The results brought a furious response from the industry – aware that the public may shun cars that do not make the grade.

In the last batch of tests in February, the programme ranked the Rover 100, a popular hatchback, as the worst for car safety. Sales from January to May this year were 32 per cent less than the corresponding period in 1996.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders condemned the tests as "trivial and misleading". Roger King, the society's public affairs director, said: "To star cars for safety on the basis of two different tests, ignoring other factors such as handling and braking characteristics is insufficient for accurate consumer guidance."

Mr King said the SMMT would not expect manufacturers to use the results in publicity material. Ernie Thomson, chief executive of the SMMT, said the industry had some "reservations about the tests" which he would discuss with the Government later this month.

The industry's comment brought a swift rebuke from the Consumers' Association, whose chief executive, Sheila McKechie, called on the industry to stop "rubbing the tests and undermining consumer confidence".

The test's supporters appear to have the upper hand. Neil Kinnock, the European Union's Transport Commissioner, welcomed the new tests and announced that the programme would be extended.

Describing the EU's annual 45,000 road accident deaths and 1.6 million injuries as "an appalling toll of tragedy", Mr Kinnock said road deaths could be cut by 30 per cent and the number of serious injuries reduced by half if all cars matched the levels of the safest models.

The survey findings will be published in *What Car?* and be made available to all 12 million RAC and AA members. However, the Government will not force dealers to carry the information, Baroness Hayman, the roads minister, said: "I believe people will research into the safety aspects of their next car as more information becomes available."



But it isn't a dream.

... but you might wake up in hospital: The Mercedes C-class did badly in the tests

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The learners from hell grip the nation

Jojo Moyes

Last night almost one-fifth of the country's population sat down in front of their television to watch a group of learner drivers reverse up kerbs, fail to stop and generally frighten the life out of their teachers.

Driving School, the latest in a series of "observational soaps" on BBC1, has been so successful that one subject, Cardiff cleaner Maureen Rees, yesterday achieved national prominence for passing her driving test at the eighth attempt.

Mrs Rees's driving lessons, aided by her long-suffering husband, Dave, have become something of a national obsession. Her terrifying exploits have helped push the viewing figures for *Driving School* up to 10 million – placing it fourth in the ratings, just behind *Coronation Street*, *EastEnders* and *Emmerdale Farm*.

The audience tuned into the documentary series to watch Mrs Rees, 55, swerve into the path of a vehicle in the fast lane, argue incessantly with her husband and even run into him with her car, a Lada called Betty.

While surprised by the series' success, its BBC producers believe they have hit upon something of a winning formula. There are two more observational soap series in development: *Yets in Practice*, a follow-up to the equally successful *Yets' School*, and *Holiday Reps*, which follows a group of holiday reps in their first season in Minorca and Lanzarote.

"It's about having characters that people can latch onto," the executive producer of the series, Grant Mansfield, said. "There's an element of the underdog there, someone destined to fail but who passed at the end."

Trying to explain the success of *Driving Lessons*, he added: "There's also the obvious thing about rites of passage and universal experience. Everyone can remember their own lessons."

Martin Arnold, spokesman for the British School of Motoring, agrees. "It's something that touches everybody's lives in one way or another. There's also a mentality among drivers that we all think we're the greatest. We're all very critical of other drivers. And it's funny watching other people," he said.

The series has been attacked by some driving instructors, who believe that their profession has been made to look foolish. But Mr Arnold says that the most important thing it highlights is the importance of finding a good driving instructor.

'We all think we're the greatest drivers. And it's funny watching other people'

"Learning to drive and taking your driving test are two of the most stressful things in people's lives. Things are different from when mum and dad learned to drive," he said.

"To people who want to take driving lessons, BSM's message would be 'don't be fooled by what you've seen. It can be a lot more straightforward. And make sure you get the right driving instructor. You've seen the nightmare that can happen if you attempt to do it with a relative'."

Approximately 1.5 million people are currently learning to drive, with 1 million driving tests taking place annually.

Maureen Rees's test day will be screened in two weeks. Drivers in the United States should take note: Mrs Rees plans to celebrate with a fly-drive holiday to Florida.



Driven to distraction: Above, Maureen Rees and her husband Dave. Below, another starling driver's hell continues when she cannot face the road even after passing her test



Drink-drivers halted

Devices that disable cars if the driver is over the alcohol limit should be considered in the continuing fight against drinking and driving, said a report out yesterday.

Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices have been used on convicted drink-drive offenders in the United States, Canada and Australia.

They are one of a number of new ideas that are "urgently needed to beat the menace of drink-driving", said the report from the British Institute of Traffic Education Research.

Produced for the Portman Group, which is funded by several leading drinks companies, the report called for tougher sentences such as immediate licence suspension, confiscation of cars belonging to convicted drink-drivers and the expansion of rehabilitation programmes for offenders.

"This research shows that to reduce the drink-drive limit alone would be of limited benefit only," said Portman Group director Jean Coussins.

"I've just taken early retirement. So now I want to keep bees and play golf. But I need to have enough money coming in to enjoy these new hobbies. Can you help?"

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news

Don't force marches through, says Ahern

Michael Streeter

The tension surrounding this weekend's highly charged Orange parade at Drumcree increased yesterday when the new Irish premier, Bertie Ahern, urged the Government not to force the march through.

At the same time, nationalist residents on the controversial Garvaghy Road route through Portadown announced plans to hold night pickets on the roadside from today.

Mr Ahern, who yesterday held a brief meeting in Belfast with Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, indicated that his support for any decision by her on the fate of Sunday's planned march was not guaranteed.

"Nobody wants to see the march forced through," he said. Asked if he would support her decision - due later this week - he added: "That will depend on what it is."

A more trenchant view still came from the Irish Foreign Minister, Ray Burke, who said it would be "folly" to force the parade through.

Their remarks were seen as a reminder of just how much hangs on Ms Mowlam's decision. By allowing the march through, she risks alienating the Irish Government and the nationalist community at a critical time for the prospects of peace.

Against that, *The Independent* revealed last week that sections of the Orange Order have drawn up plans to bring the province to a standstill if the Portadown march is not allowed through its traditional route.

One theory is that the Government might allow the march to go through, ensuring a short,

if sharp backlash, rather than a long, drawn-out stand-off.

Mr Ahern, who will be raising the issue in talks with Tony Blair in London tomorrow, went out of his way to praise Ms Mowlam as a person of "commitment, energy and drive".

He also said he would do everything possible to bring about peace in Northern Ireland.

"I will play my part and I look forward to doing that maybe in a more helpful way than has been done in the past," said Mr Ahern, who later held talks in Dublin with representatives of the Portadown residents and others from the Ormeau Road in Belfast.

Earlier, Ms Mowlam said she was surprised by the decision of the Nationalist residents to hold the roadside vigils.

"I hope the demonstration is peaceful and within the law and in the end that it will still work for common sense to prevail," she said.

Brendan McKenna, spokesman for the residents, said a street festival planned for the day of the parade on Sunday will also go ahead.

He urged the Secretary of State and the RUC Chief Constable to re-route the Orange Parade from Drumcree Church. "For one year the Nationalist community must have a breathing space from the parade, from the fear, the anger and the real apprehension it causes."

He also confirmed elaborate plans for a "justice camp" and protests involving women and children.

The protests were immediately condemned by unionists as deliberately provocative. The Democratic Unionist Party's Nigel Dodds said: "It's a clear attempt to up the ante. This is deeply regrettable."

Sister sledge laps up big chill on the trail of adventure



Cold front: Wendy Smith, who is to attempt a single-handed crossing of the North American continent to raise funds for charity, with two of her canine companions, Huskies Skeeta and Lupo, at the World of Snow ski slope in Telford, Shropshire. Photograph: Steve Hill/Newstream

Union plans summer of discontent

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

The Government is facing its first major industrial conflict after leaders of 9,000 cabin crew at British Airways decided to press ahead with a three-day strike expected to begin next Wednesday.

If the action goes ahead, all BA services using Heathrow will be affected together with all intercontinental flights from Gatwick, although the airline will attempt to operate as many services as it can with the help of non-strikers and staff on short-term contracts.

While cabin crew leaders decided to go ahead with industrial action, representatives of 9,000 ground staff opted to suspend a decision on stoppages for 48 hours pending talks with management.

If negotiations involving BA's airport workers break down, they may decide to walk out for 24 hours on 11 July to coincide with the third day of the cabin crew stoppage.

In a telephone conversation with Bill Morris, leader of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Bob Ayling, the airline's chief executive, agreed to address the grievances of

ground staff. According to the union, however, he registered no enthusiasm to discuss the cabin crew's grievances.

Management later however professed "amazement" at the union's decision to call the strike. A spokesman said that Mr Ayling had agreed to outside conciliation on the issue as requested by Mr Morris.

The company is prepared to negotiate on the terms and conditions of 1,400 staff who work for the airline's catering division which is to be sold off. Many catering staff have families on the Indian Sub-Continent and may respond to

improved assurances of subsidised travel when the subsidiary is sold.

Mr Morris agreed to suspend a decision over a strike by ground staff, which is threatened in protest at the sell off, but authorised the 3-day stoppage by cabin crew.

The transport union leader said he would appeal to Mr Ayling to negotiate on both disputes. Mr Morris said that the airline's chief executive, however, made it clear that he was only prepared to address the concerns of ground staff.

He accused Mr Ayling of turning a "deaf ear" to common

sense and called on BA to negotiate a settlement of the cabin crew's dispute.

Mr Ayling said there had been a "breakdown in communications" at the union. He contended that Mr Morris had given him until the end of yesterday to respond to the union's arguments. The T&G had nevertheless authorised action before the deadline, he said.

The BA chief executive said that the suggestion of involving an outside "facilitator" was a good one. Later last night a union spokesman commented "Why don't they just speak to the union?"

DNA break in Kent murder hunt

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

A DNA sample of the suspected killer of Lin Russell and her daughter Megan has been recovered in what could be a breakthrough in the investigation. A forensic technique has allowed police to recover DNA - a unique genetic fingerprint - from dead hair from the scene of the murder in Kent. Previously DNA samples had to be from living cells for a sample to be obtained.

The mother, 44, and her six-year-old daughter were bludgeoned to death a year ago. The second daughter Josie, 10, was left for dead by the attacker, who also killed their dog. The assault happened on a country footpath near the family's home in Chilenden, Kent.

Police believe a hammer was used. Josie barely survived but gradually regained her power of speech and began to remember details of what happened.

She and her father, Shaun Russell, now live in Wales, where the family lived before moving to Kent.

The Forensic Science Service has developed a method of obtaining mitochondrial DNA from dead hair and bones. It was used to identify the bones of the Tsar's family four years ago. The DNA is inherited through the mother and does not degrade like chromosomal DNA currently obtained from living cells such as blood and saliva samples. A hair sample without roots was recovered from the murder scene.

Mitochondrial DNA is not as accurate as the current system but could help eliminate suspects and provide additional evidence against the alleged killer. The breakthrough in the DNA sampling is expected to be announced today.

Doctor Janet Thompson, chief executive of the Forensic Science Service, said yesterday that the new DNA technique was capable of providing a vital piece of evidence in the case, as it cannot be relied upon on its own.

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A wider role in the home is often incompatible with being a breadwinner. **Glenda Cooper** on the latest research

Why a working father can never be a true new man

Family-friendly policies, such as job shares and flexi-time are failing to be relevant to many working fathers, according to a new report.

Cutting back on working hours is simply not an option for many working dads who may want to spend more time with their families but as the main breadwinners just cannot afford to do so. But many men still have no idea that becoming a father may affect their work and have no way of dealing with the increased demands that fatherhood brings, the British Psychological Society's Women and Psychology Conference heard yesterday.

More than 50 per cent of men had not made any plans to combine work and fatherhood said Sarah Lewis, a chartered organisational psychologist.

"With working mothers there are visible signs - people are always asking when is it due or are you going back to work? That doesn't happen to men," said Ms Lewis, who interviewed 200 men about how they coped with being a working father and identified three main groups.

The first was the "daddy track" - workers who had adopted long-term strategies to help them be a successful father. These workers deliberately tried to work shorter hours, had lower expectations of their role at work and often did not seek or refused promotion. They sought jobs close to home and also often chose jobs that had a minimum of overnight travel. The second group had partners who worked full-time who employed a lot of short-term strategies in order to play their



Balancing act: A working dad collects his son from the Pillar Box Nursery, Bow, east London yesterday, after a long day. Photograph: Tony Buckingham

part in childrearing. "They were significantly more involved in day-to-day childcare than their fathers had been," said Ms Lewis. "Because their wives worked they had to manage their working lives better and do more childcare."

The other group was the "in-

divisible parents", she said. "These fathers said 'I work long hours because I am the main breadwinner. My wife is at home looking after the children. We're both doing a good job between the two of us and it doesn't matter how often I see my children'."

While a quarter of all fathers said that they would always or frequently take time off if their children needed them too, only 4 per cent said they would leave a meeting early. "There was a need to be visible at work," Ms Lewis said. "The men seemed to be seen to be there."

More than one in seven said they were having to work in the evenings or at the weekends. Family-friendly policies as they existed at the moment were not practical for many families. "They are suitable for the second breadwinner or the main childcare, not the main bread-

winner trying to support a family," said Ms Lewis. "Job shares or flexi-time often involve working less time but the drop in income is not what the families are looking for."

Ms Lewis said that more helpful measures would be a change in attitude. "Organisa-

... but real women can still get ahead

The 1980s "Working Girl" image is out of date, with women no longer having to resort to adopting male characteristics to get ahead at work.

In the past it has been thought that the women who did best were those who employed masculine qualities such as assertiveness, aggression and dominance. By doing this it was thought they were more valued by others and in their own eyes than their sisters who were seen as more traditionally feminine.

Rut Sara Paterson, psychologist at the University of Westminster, told the British Psychological Society's Women and Psychology Conference in Loughborough her study of 50 women in a variety of professions - including computer programmers, physiotherapists and chefs - showed that women who were characterised by more feminine qualities, such as empathy, friendliness and compassion, did just as well at work and valued themselves as highly.

Ms Paterson said she was thrilled by the findings. "Now women can be seen as powerful women while still acknowledging their femininity."

tions need to develop a talent for recognising and rewarding performance and achievement rather than their current talent for recording visibility and attendance.

"It's this idea of being there which is counting against working fathers."



Playground chat: Boys are more likely to brag about their conquests. Photograph: Jane Baker

Tarts and studs still dominate the playground

It may be 30 years after the sexual revolution, but in teenagers' eyes girls are still tarts and boys are still studs.

A study of 14- to 16-year-old girls and boys has found the old double standards firmly in place, with girls still worrying about their reputations while boys brag about their conquests. But researchers warned that unless ac-

tio was taken to counter such attitudes, implications for sexual health were serious in the light of HIV/Aids.

Seen as "looking for it" if they carried condoms, girls were either having to risk their health or their reputations.

Linda Dainty of the University of Wolverhampton, asked the teenagers to "imagine" telling a

creature from outer space about what sex was like. All the boys expected orgasm or "the buzz", but one of the girls spoke about having an orgasm.

Telling friends about sexual exploits was seen as a pleasure for boys but a danger for girls. Boys were termed "studs" or "stallions", while girls remained "slags" or "tarts". Girls who en-

joyed sex were downgraded even further to being "dirty cows".

"Boys relived the time they had through their sexual story-telling, they would go up in their mates' esteem," said Ms Dainty, speaking at the British Psychological Society's Women and Psychology Conference in Loughborough yesterday.

"In effect they had two orgasms

- one real and one in the telling. The 15-year-old girls told me that one of the worst things about sex were if [their partner] went and told everybody and 'getting you a name'."

Both sexes thought that either boys or girls should carry condoms to protect against sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy, but "girls who carried condoms on the

off chance were perceived as tarts by boys, and even girls colluded in this thinking that such girls were asking for it," said Ms Dainty.

She warned that safe sex messages were unlikely to be effective until these attitudes were addressed. "Society's current system of sexual morality operates in opposition to the urgent need to protect sexual health."

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news

Probationers commit a murder a week

Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

Offenders on probation are charged with one murder and a sexual assault on average every week, a Home Office report revealed yesterday.

Criminals serving community sentences and under supervision after being released from prison are also on average said to be responsible for an attempted murder every fortnight and nearly one act of violence every week. In four cases, mentally ill people who failed to receive psy-

chiatric treatment despite it being a condition of their probation order, went on to kill. Failure properly to supervise criminals was found in nearly one-fifth of all cases, some of which contributed to further reoffending.

The study, which disclosed that 69 murder charges were brought against people under supervision during a 13-month period, will be seized upon by critics of the Probation Service who have long argued that it is a soft option and have called for greater use of imprisonment. There will also be concern

Charges against criminals under supervision		
During 13 months to December 1996, there were 285 charges against people on probation, including:	Attempted murder - 32 Rape - 30 Possession of firearm/offensive weapon - 19 Robbery - 15 GBH - 12 Indecent assault - 10	Kidnap - 7 Attempted rape - 6 Wounding with intent - 5 Manslaughter - 5 Buggery - 4 Armed robbery - 4

about the apparent lack of treatment for mentally ill offenders. This follows an alarming number of killings by former psychiatric patients.

But chief probation officers

argued yesterday that the offences, while shocking, were only a tiny proportion of the 190,000 people they dealt with every year.

Helen Crosby, of the Home

Office's Probation Unit, concluded in the report: "The analysis shows that offenders under probation supervision are charged with murder or a serious sexual offence at a rate of

about one per week; this is a matter of considerable concern."

The Home Office took the unusual step yesterday of publishing the Probation Circular of Serious Instant Reports, which are voluntary provided by the 54 regional probation services in England and Wales.

The study examined 204 incidents involving 184 offenders from November 1995 to December 1996, most aged 20-35; nearly half had a previous conviction for a violent offence. Most offences happened within eight months of supervision.

The vast majority of the offenders had problems involving mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, and convictions for sexual offences, but only one-fifth of their sentences included specific measures to deal with these. About one-third of the 27 mentally disordered offenders had difficulty obtaining treatment.

Supervision failures identified in 36 cases included not following national standards, failure to carry out home visits, not covering staff absences, poor inter-service and inter-agency communications, and failure

to deal with negligent officers.

Mary Honeyball, of the Association of Chief Officers of Probation, said: "The report shows that probation work is very often a matter of life and death ... This report gives no clues as to how many incidents are avoided due to the well judged and timely actions of staff."

A Home Office statement said offences committed while on probation were of "great concern". But added: "However, such incidents do not necessarily indicate a supervision failure by the probation service."

The beautiful and the exotic: a smuggler's booty more lucrative than the drug trade

Kim Sengupta

When Customs officers smashed open the two statues at London's Heathrow airport all their suspicions appeared to be confirmed. But the package inside was not the expected high-grade cannabis. Instead they had stumbled across something much more lucrative for smugglers - rhino horn.

The horn highly prized in the Far East sells for about £7,000 a kilo. Cannabis would fetch about £3,000 a kilo. There was more than £25,000 worth hidden in the two Plasticine figures.

That shipment from South Africa, intercepted in London on the way to Taiwan, is just one illustration of the amount of money that can be made from endangered species on the international black market.

Ivory, crocodile skins, pelts and bones of big cats like tigers and leopards, live rare birds and birds eggs, corals and tortoise shells are all much in demand by unscrupulous collec-

range of goods from crocodile leather handbags to stuffed birds and turtle shell ashtrays. However, the goods would be confiscated if detected being brought into Britain, and prosecution may follow. The last available figures, for 1995-96, show that Customs seized 12,178 items derived from endangered species, 4,374 live animals, and 2,748 plants.

To highlight the problem Customs and the Natural History Museum have opened an exhibition at the museum in South Kensington, west London. It is due to run from today until August 31. The main aim is to inform travellers going abroad about endangered species, and the inadvisability of buying products made from them.

Customs officer Charles Mackay, head of the CITES enforcement team at Heathrow, said: "We came across a Russian recently with 200 live turtles packed in a couple of cases. One of them had escaped and was making its way around the baggage carousel. But we also have much more sophisticated smuggling attempts."

"Ivory is one of the most common items. We are also coming across products from tigers and leopards which are in demand for traditional medicines by expatriate Chinese communities. A tiny plaster strip with tiger balm can sell for around £7."

Dawn Primarolo, Financial Secretary to the Treasury said: "Travellers need to know souvenirs could be made from endangered species and their purchase could encourage this unlawful trade. This exhibition will increase public awareness."

Customs officers say they would also like to see awareness on environmental issues raised among the judiciary. Most of the prosecution for smuggling endangered species products is under Section 170 of the Customs and Excise Act of 1979 - carrying a maximum sentence of seven years, and/or an unlimited fine.

But in 1995 a man who was convicted of possessing more than 500 dead endangered specimens and believed to have links with an international syndicate only received a two year sentence.

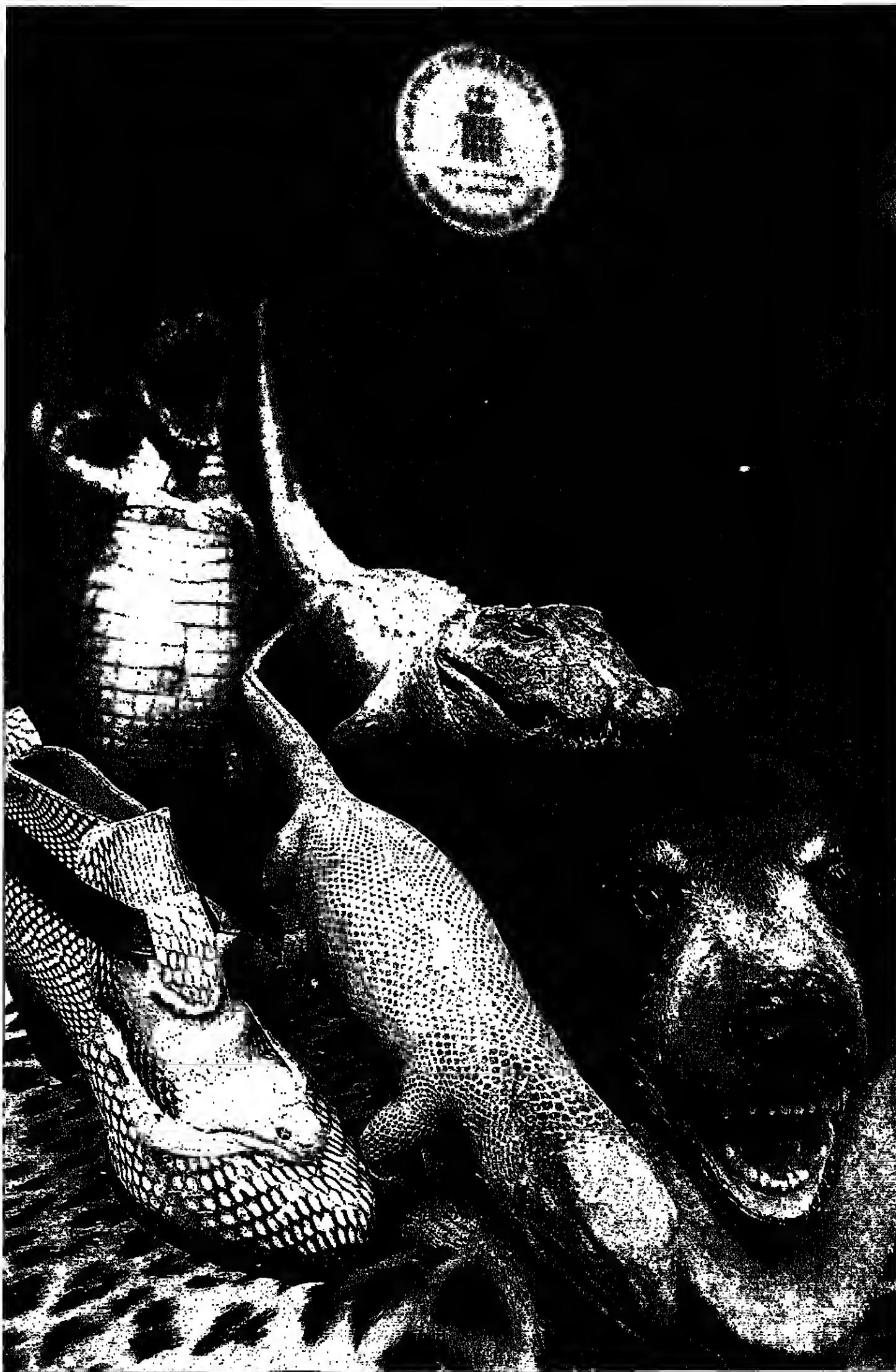
And, after another successful conviction, the leader of an international gang of rare egg smugglers was sentenced to just eight months, and his associates received between two and three months each.

'Travellers need to know that their souvenirs could be made from endangered species'

tors and traders across the world. However, the problem is not just a large scale commercial one. A huge amount of banned items seized at ports and airports in the United Kingdom are brought back by ordinary travellers who had bought them as souvenirs abroad.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has been signed by 136 member countries of the United Nations. Under its regulations more than 800 species of plants and animals are currently banned from international trade, and another 23,000 are strictly controlled.

But the international restrictions do not apply to indigenous domestic markets, and there is nothing to stop tourists from buying a wide



Customs haul: A selection of products made from endangered species, some bought as souvenirs, which have been brought into this country. An exhibition opens today at the Natural History Museum aimed at alerting travellers of the problem. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Two are jailed in 'Band of Gold' tragedy

Kate Watson-Smyth

Two men were jailed for 10 years yesterday for the manslaughter of a teenager who turned to prostitution after watching a television series about vice-girls. Lucy Burchell, 16, died after taking an overdose of heroin. She started to work on the streets after watching the ITV series *Band of Gold*.

Tahir Khan, 26, from Salter, Birmingham and Rungzab Khan, 25, of Hodge Hill, Birmingham, were also convicted at Birmingham Crown Court of supplying heroin, and possession with intent to supply. Lucy disappeared on 15 August and her body was found five days later in Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Passing sentence, Mr Justice McKinnon said: "You are both, in a real sense, evil young men, actively engaged in the wicked trade of heroin-dealing." The conviction for manslaughter was "by omission", because they failed to summon medical help for Lucy after she fell into a coma. "She died when small effort on your part to summon help may well have saved her life."

The court heard she began working the streets of Walsall in the evenings while sitting her GCSE exams during the day. Each night she took a change of clothes to a children's home where a 15-year-old friend was living, and the two then went to a red-light area. According to a another prostitute, herself aged 15, Lucy would "go with anyone, anywhere."

By the time she died, her parents, Graham and Christine, of Great Wyrley, Staffordshire, knew Lucy was mixing with prostitutes. They tried to reason with her, offered her a car and said they would buy her a horse if she would stop. They thought their pleas had succeeded when Lucy wrote them a letter apologising for upsetting them. But she continued to walk the streets.

The letter, adorned with hearts and kisses, said: "I can understand that you must be worried. I suppose I thought though there was no reason for you to be worried (which there isn't) but I know how much I must be upsetting you."

Two days later she was dead. The two men had picked her up in the Calmore area of Walsall and taken her to a house in Edgbaston where they fed her a dose of 80-per-cent-pure heroin. She fell into a coma and by 6pm the following day she was dead.

After the trial her brother Craig, a student, read a statement from his parents: "We will never be able to make sense of what has happened and the loss of our daughter will always be with us, every day ..."

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Genetic weapons to provide force for high-tech ethnic war

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

Genetic weapons that could be targeted at specific racial groups in a form of hi-tech ethnic warfare are to be investigated by the British Medical Association.

They do not exist but could be available in five to 10 years, the association said. Doctors fear developments in genetic therapy to cure disease might be turned to evil ends in the hands of a dictator.

Biological or chemical weapons could theoretically be targeted by addition of a gene marker to attack a specific part of the human body. The genetically engineered toxin might be sprayed into the air or added to food and water. If clusters of genes only seen in particular ethnic groups could be identified, it might be possible to de-

velop an ethnic weapon. Vivienne Nathanson, head of science and ethics at the BMA, said: "It is clearly a very frightening scenario. We are trying to prevent new weapons being developed and distributed. We want to know whether genetic weapons are feasible and how to control or stop them."

The investigation, commissioned by the association's board of science, was announced at the BMA's annual conference in Edinburgh. It is due for completion in 12 months. Scientists expect to be able to produce the first genetically targeted drugs in five years. The drugs would repair faulty DNA within the cell and might be used to treat conditions such as diabetes and cystic fibrosis. Dr Nathanson said: "No one has been able to tell me why, if we can produce ge-



Tribal conflict: Doctors are concerned that ethnic warfare could be waged in future with genetically targeted drugs

Photograph: Corbis

netically targeted drugs with a good effect, we won't be able to produce similar drugs with a bad effect in the same time-scale."

The Human Genome Project, which is mapping the entire human genetic code, might produce enough information to allow specific genetic types to be identified. "We know the genes for hair colour, eye colour and height. If 90 per cent of the [enemy] have blue eyes, blond

hair and are over six feet tall, that could be the cluster you are looking for." Certain blood types were commoner in different ethnic groups and could also be targeted, she said. Earlier the conference called for the manufacture and supply of instruments of torture to be banned after bearing of British companies that had sold the equipment abroad.

An iron foundry in Birmingham had produced leg and arm shackles and other companies had made hi-tech torture chambers, which used low-level noise to drive victims mad, and a mass gallows for export to Saudi Arabia, the conference was told. Investigations by Amnesty International had found a number of companies exploiting legal loopholes to manufacture and export the equipment.

James Barrett, a member of the BMA council and chairman of the medical group of Amnesty International, said shackles made by the Birmingham company were deliberately designed to crush the radial nerve in the arm when tightened. "They made good profits," he said. Sandy Macara, chairman of the BMA, said: "There is nothing good about the profits made out of this trade".

The conference called for the creation of mechanisms in every country through which doctors could report human-rights abuses and torture. It supported the Government's ban on land mines, which was announced last May following an appeal by Diana, Princess of Wales, and said the money saved on the defence budget should be used to clear them.

The conference called for proper funding of community care after bearing half of all blocked medical and geriatric hospital beds were occupied by patients who could not be discharged because of a shortage of social services funds.

Doctor's dilemma over cancer patient

A doctor described yesterday how she was accused of taking the moral high ground after she pleaded with a social services manager to help a patient die at home, writes Jeremy Laurence.

Dr Joy Edelman, consultant physician at King George Hospital, Redbridge, north-east London, said her patient who had cancer, was forced to spend his last weeks in hospital separated from his family where he died a lonely and miserable death.

The case was presented to the British Medical Association's annual conference in Edinburgh as an example of how expensive hospital beds are being blocked by a shortage of cheap facilities in the community which prevent the admission of the seriously ill and deny terminal cases a dignified death.

Dr Edelman had contacted social services to obtain a hoist and other equipment and was told there would be a delay. She protested that it would be too late. "The man I spoke to accused me of standing on the moral high ground. I said yes, and I was proud of it. I said it was a disgrace that any remaining happiness my patient might have had from his last weeks was being denied to him."

The conference called for proper funding of community care after bearing half of all blocked medical and geriatric hospital beds were occupied by patients who could not be discharged because of a shortage of social services funds.

Cold and flu sufferers will be sent to hospital in GP shake-up

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Patients will be able to go to hospital for so-called "Monday morning" ailments such as colds, flu and headaches, normally treated in GPs' surgeries, under plans announced yesterday by the Government to expand primary care services in the NHS.

Hospitals and health authorities will be given permission to hire GPs on annual salaries of around £50,000 to open up surgeries in areas where doctors are reluctant to run general practices. They could use clinics in the NHS hospitals, or empty shop premises in the high street.

Most GPs are independent contractors, with NHS co-

tracts delivering about £45,000 a year. With additional sums for practice staff and expenses, it can provide a comfortable living, but many family doctors are now complaining about the increasing workload, stress, and long hours, which may be putting off young doctors from joining general practices in the inner cities, where the problems of recruitment and retention are

particularly acute. Hospitals and health authorities will be able to attract GPs by offering them more than the contract rate for the job. They will be able to offer women doctors the chance of more flexible working arrangements to enable them to return to the profession after a career break for having children.

The GPs will still act as

"gatekeepers", deciding whether to refer their patients to the consultants in the hospital for more treatment.

Alan Milburn, the health minister, yesterday announced that salaried GPs would be encouraged, in a series of pilot schemes, to start from April 1998. But he ruled out allowing supermarkets or high street chemists to run general practices

by hiring GPs. Mr Milburn said it would help to recruit family doctors to areas such as Sunderland, Leeds, and London, where shortages were being experienced.

Other GPs will be allowed to develop "one stop" surgeries, combining care for chronic diseases, minor injuries, the mentally ill and may include community hospital beds for

short-stay treatment. One practice in Newark wants to offer optician's services, dentistry, a pharmacy, a lay counsellor, and a rural advice centre. "The Government's vision is to bring the NHS closer to home. Some of these proposals are about blurring the distinction between primary (GPs) and secondary (hospital) care," the minister said. However, having taken

over the pilot projects from the Tory government, Mr Milburn has refused to approve any schemes to expand services by GP fundholders, in which practices run their own budgets, because the Government is committed to replacing them with locality commissioning, where GPs in an area band together to obtain care for their patients from hospitals.

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news

Woman 'invented road-rage killer'

Michael Streeter

A woman stabbed her fiancé to death after a ferocious argument and then invented a "mystery murdering motorist" who had killed him in a road rage attack, a court was told yesterday.

David Crigman QC, for the prosecution, told the jury at Birmingham Crown Court, that Tracie Andrews and Lee Harvey rowed while driving home from a pub before Mr Harvey was stabbed with a penknife more than 30 times in the head, neck, chest and back.

"After the attack she was to claim that the death was caused by the occupant of another car in the course of a driving dispute," Mr Crigman said. "There never was some mystery murdering motorist. It was her."

The court heard that Ms Andrews, 28, who denies murder, and Mr Harvey, 25, had a "volatile and turbulent" relationship. Three months before the killing on 1 December, 1996, police had been called to Mr Harvey's flat after an argument.

On the day of Mr Harvey's



On trial: Tracie Andrews arriving at Birmingham Crown Court yesterday. Centre: The murder scene near Alvechurch, Worcestershire, where Lee Harvey (right) was stabbed to death. Photograph: Newsteart



death it appeared they had had a long argument at Ms Andrews' home. Later they had rowed again in the car on the way back from a pub in Bromsgrove to her flat in Alvechurch, Worcester-

shire, but Mr Harvey's white RS2000 Escort turbo stopped and both had got out. Ms Andrews had then launched a "violent" attack on him.

On their way from the pub

along country lanes, the couple were spotted by two witnesses whose evidence meant the defendant's assertion of a second car pursuing the white Escort was "a lie", Mr Crigman said.

Later Ms Andrews tucked the knife she had used to murder Mr Harvey into her high-heeled boots, disposing of it in a waste bin while being treated at Princess Alexandra hospital in

Redditch, on the night of the killing, Mr Crigman said.

The bins were regularly emptied and Mr Crigman said that as it took police several days to collate evidence pointing to

Ms Andrews as the killer, the knife had long gone.

The court was told that Richard Main, who was visiting a friend, Susan Duncan, at a house near the murder scene, heard a voice in distress and Mr Main asked Mrs Duncan to call an ambulance while he ran back to the road. The defendant had "mentioned no other car, no other motorist".

Mr Crigman alleged that it was not until Mrs Duncan came out of the house that Ms Andrews began to construct her complex story of her fiancé dying in a road rage attack.

Ms Andrews had described the other vehicle as a black Sierra-type car and said that it was the passenger who had attacked her fiancé after they had exchanged rude gestures.

At one point, the front seat passenger of the other vehicle got out of the car and went towards Mr Harvey. He had "big staring eyes", she said and remembered her fiancé calling him something like "fat man".

Ms Andrews alleged that the man then hit out at Mr Harvey several times. The man had also hit her and when she got up he was walking back to his car. She had said: "Lee was making a funny noise like a gurgling

noise. I knelt in something wet. ... I started to cry."

Mr Crigman told the court that a "hank" of human hair matching Ms Andrews' own hair had been found at the murder scene along with a few strands clasped in the dead man's hands.

Also, blood splashes, consistent with having come from

'There was never some mystery murdering motorist'

an injured person dripping blood on to the floor was found at the back of the Mr Harvey's car, which Mr Crigman said was "totally inconsistent" with Ms Andrews' story that he had been attacked at the front of the vehicle. He said: "In short, Lee Harvey was under attack and assaulted in a wholly different location than where the defendant was claiming some mystery attacker attacked him." The case continues today.

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Woodhead 'in cahoots' with prince

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, has been accused of acting "in cahoots" with the Prince of Wales to promote a teacher training initiative which appears to conflict with government policy.

Don Foster, the Liberal Democrats' education spokesman, says that Mr Woodhead's plans for more school-centred teacher training contradict ministers' statements before the election about how teachers should be trained.

He asked Estelle Morris, the schools minister, in the Commons last week: "Will she explain on whose authority the Chief Inspector of Schools, Mr Chris Woodhead, possibly in cahoots with Prince Charles, is promoting school-centred teacher training?" Prince Charles, who shares Mr Woodhead's concern about "trendy" teaching methods, is understood to have had several meetings with the chief inspector, including at least one at Highgrove.

Traditionalists, who blame universities and colleges for failing to train new teachers to teach the basics, support school-centred schemes started by the previous government under which schools devise and run their own courses.

However, the schemes were attacked by Labour, which

favours a partnership between schools and higher education, during debates on the Education Bill in 1994.

Ministers are preparing to announce changes to school-centred training as part of a package of measures to be published on Friday.

Ms Morris said in reply to Mr Foster: "I remain convinced that we need a combination of sound practice in schools and strong links with institutions of higher education if we are to train people to be effective teachers."

Many teachers argue that reports from the Office for Standards in Education, which Mr Woodhead heads, show that the schemes have had only limited success. Experts say that they fail to give new teachers the overview of education which they need.

Mr Woodhead said last night: "I do not accept the school-centred teacher training is a failed experiment. I am not promoting the scheme. What I am interested in is general initiatives designed to ensure that the excellence of our outstanding schools is used to the benefit of the system."

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "Heads have voted with their feet over school-centred teacher training. The vast majority have stayed with higher education and are running programmes in partnership with them."

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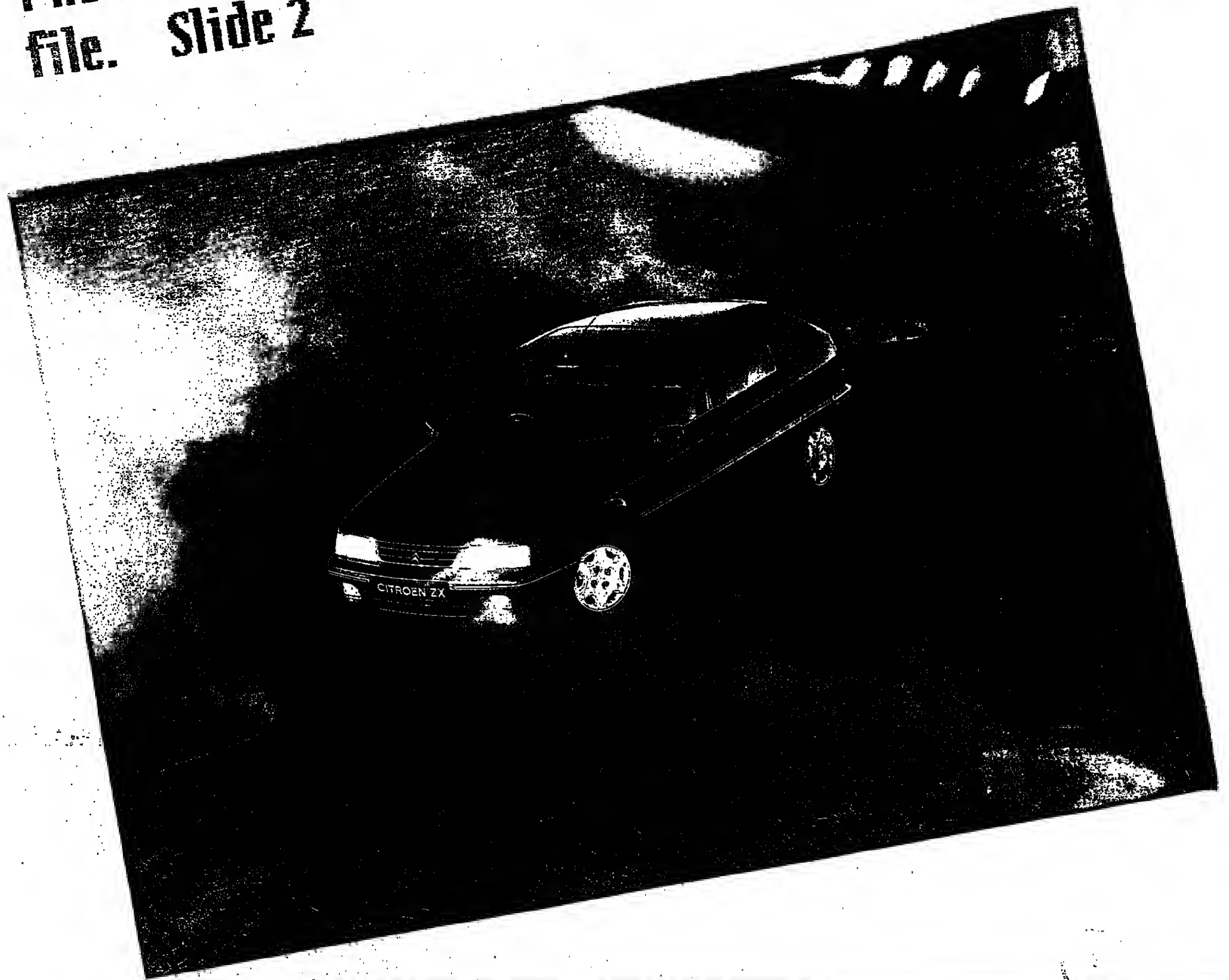
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Mandelson to stand for party executive

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

He is becoming the political antithesis of Macavity the Mystery Man. Wherever you may care to look, Peter Mandelson is there. The minister without portfolio, who already sits on several cabinet sub-committees and who is in charge of the Millennium Experience, is to make a bid for even more power. He plans to stand for election to Labour's ruling body, the National Executive

Committee. The move will be seen by Mandelson-watchers as the latest step along the route to political legitimacy for Tony Blair's arch-rival.

The architect of Labour's election campaign has become well known as a spin-doctor and as one of the figures famously described before the election by Clare Short, now Secretary of State for International Development, as "men who live in the dark." Now he plans to make his name as a far more public figure.

"I want to build on the election success through membership of the NEC. After modernising Labour, we need to bring about lasting change in Britain. The party and the Government working closely together is crucial to achieving this," he said.

There is no guarantee that he will be elected to the body. Last year Jack Straw, now Home Secretary, found himself without a seat and will not stand again.

An aide to Mr Mandelson said that although he was per-

ceived as being unpopular, this was not the case. "This is about setting out that he does have the support of the party. He spends a lot of time going around the country to constituencies and there is genuine warmth towards him," he said.

If he does achieve his aim, Mr Mandelson will sit alongside Robin Cook, David Blunkett, Mo Mowlam and Harriet Harman. Tony Blair and John Prescott have seats as leader and deputy leader. Gordon Brown's

decision to step down leaves a gap. The election will take place under the one member, one vote system, with ballot papers being posted out in August and the result being announced at the party conference in Brighton in October.

Mr Mandelson's role seems to have been constantly expanding since the election. There had been speculation that he would be put in charge of a spending department, but instead he was given his current

post in the Cabinet Office. Although he is not in the Cabinet, he apparently has more power than some who are. The cabinet committees on which he sits cover constitutional reform, London, home and social affairs, economic affairs, legislation, European issues, welfare to work and food safety. He is also responsible for the £590m Millennium Experience in Greenwich, south-east London.

Every morning Mr Mandel-

son chairs the daily media meeting for press officers and ministers. He has even taken to visiting departmental press offices to inspect their work.

There is considerable nervousness and even jealousy among Labour MPs about his position. Many believe he acts as the eyes and ears of the Prime Minister, and worry that whenever he speaks he may be speaking on Mr Blair's behalf.

It is expected that the number of "big names" on the NEC

will be scaled down in favour of more representation from the wider party. Ironically, the man at the heart of new Labour might only be able to sit on the NEC for a year in the seat he is seeking. If the party's latest modernisation plans go ahead, MPs will no longer be able to stand for the constituency section of the committee, although the Cabinet will be represented. Dennis Skinner and Diane Abbott are also likely to lose their seats.

MP sleaze report uses hard words

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

The 900-page report on the cash-for-questions affair, which is expected to be highly critical of many of the 10 former-MPs involved, will be published tomorrow. Robert Sheldon, the new chairman of the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee, said that the language used by the report into the actions of the former MPs was "quite strong".

The 10 against whom allegations have been made will be given the chance to read the report from 10am and it will be published at 4pm. The most serious allegations have been made against five, all of whom were defeated at the elections. Neil Hamilton is alleged to have lied to the former deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine, but has consistently denied accepting cash to ask questions in Parliament on behalf of Mohamed al-Fayed.

Other former MPs whose behaviour is considered by the report include Sir Michael Grylls (former MP for Surrey North West) who received at least £86,000 from Mr Green; Sir Andrew Borden (former MP for Brighton Kemptown) who admits failing to declare £5,319 given by Mr Fayed; and Michael Brown (former MP for Brigg and Cleethorpes) who did not declare £6,000 commission for lobbying for tobacco interests to the tax authorities until seven years after he received it; and Tim Smith, the former minister who resigned as candidate for Beaconsfield because he was alleged to have accepted around £18,000 in cash from Mr Fayed which he did not declare.

The report had been prepared by Sir Gordon Downey at the end of March, but its publication was delayed because Parliament was prorogued early by John Major, the outgoing prime minister. The subsequent row over Mr Major's decision cast a shadow over the whole Tory election campaign.

Mr Sheldon vowed to clean up sleaze and said: "I hope that by the end of this Parliament, the standing of MPs will be higher than it is at the beginning. That is the aim of this committee."

Great gun surrender begins as pistols become a weapon of the past



Guns on display at Belgravia police station, London, yesterday, at the start of Britain's biggest mass surrender of handguns. Some 160,000 large-calibre pistols were made illegal by the Firearms (Amendment) Act, which was passed following the Dunblane massacre. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Labour fails to whip up support for 2000

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Only 32 Labour MPs – less than one-tenth of the Government's backbench strength – have so far backed a Whitehall-inspired Commons motion of confidence in the millennium celebrations.

A backbench motion tabled in the House last Thursday by Diana Organ, the new MP for Forest of Dean, was closely modelled on a press statement issued on the same day by Chris Smith, Secretary of State for National Heritage.

Mr Smith's parliamentary private secretary, Alice Mahon, has been one of the MPs going around the Commons, asking MPs to sign the motion.

But it is known that a number of Labour MPs have refused to support it, even though it has been put down as a simple statement of opinion, and is not debatable. There are 329 backbench Labour MPs who are not ministers or whips and are entitled to sign Commons motions, and 32 signatures is a poor showing for a policy that has been so strongly picked up by Tony Blair.

Another Commons motion, also tabled last Thursday and also featuring Mrs Organ as a sponsor, has so far been signed by 167 MPs – sending greetings and best wishes to Mukhtar Pakpahan, the imprisoned leader of an independent Indonesian trade union.

The fact that the "Millennium Experience" attracts less support than Mr Pakpahan will embarrass ministers, including Peter Mandelson, the Minister without Portfolio, who have been trying to whip up enthusiasm for the celebrations. The Commons motion was part of that exercise. The motion notes that the celebrations go beyond Greenwich to benefit the whole country, including the £200m Millennium Awards scheme, which "will help individuals fulfil personal goals".

In a press notice, also issued last Thursday, Mr Smith said that the awards scheme would "help individuals fulfil personal goals and put something back into their communities".

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Clarke dismisses referendum call

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Kenneth Clarke, the former chancellor, yesterday dismissed William Hague's call for a referendum on the outcome of the Amsterdam summit by saying that Britain was "becoming like Switzerland" without the cowbells.

In the first signs of his readiness to speak his mind from the backbenches, Mr Clarke, the defeated challenger for the leadership, made it clear that he did not support the proposal by William Hague, the Conservative leader, for a referendum on the Inter-Governmental Conference.

The Independent has learned that Mr Hague had been prepared to offer Mr Clarke the deputy leadership, if he had been prepared to serve in his team, but Mr Clarke made it clear after the leadership election that he wanted to return to the backbenches.

Yesterday, Mr Clarke said on BBC radio that he did not want another "four or five years of collective discussion" as a member of the Shadow Cabinet. "When I looked at shadow government, I felt I've been there, done that; it's time, having been in government, to try to be an elder statesman," he said.

With a sideswipe at Baroness Thatcher, Mr Clarke denied he planned to match the brooding presence of Sir Edward Heath as a constant critic of his successor. "I think I've behaved very much better towards Margaret than sometimes she behaved towards John [Major]," he said.

But he wasted no time in distancing himself from Mr Hague's call for a referendum. "I think we are having a lot of referendums in this country at the moment. Tony Blair seems keen on them as well. I sometimes think we are becoming like Switzerland without the cowbells," Mr Clarke said.

"I personally prefer the Parliamentary system. I am quite happy to listen to the arguments for a referendum on the Amsterdam treaty although I haven't had too many people pressing me to be allowed to have my say in a referendum."

Mr Clarke said the time

would come when MPs would have the chance to debate the legislation that came from the decisions at the IGC. Mr Blair's office supported Mr Clarke in rejecting the idea of a referendum on the IGC, which Mr Hague called for at the Scottish Tory conference in Perth.

A Downing Street source said: "It's more to do with internal Tory Party politics than the IGC. What are we going to

have a referendum about? We said we would retain the veto and we did; we got a deal on border controls and fish, which the Tories failed to do when they were in office."

While praising Mr Hague for appointing a balanced Shadow Cabinet, Mr Clarke expressed the hope that Mr Hague would not "move further to the right into hardline Euroscepticism".

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	AMOUNT INVESTED	GROSS NET
The net rates shown are for illustrative purposes and are based on interest credited or paid after deduction of income tax at the lower rate (currently 20%), which may be reclaimed by non-taxpayers.	£50,000 and over	6.75% 5.40%
	£25,000 to £49,999	6.25% 5.00%
	£10,000 to £24,999	6.00% 4.80%
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Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

Ray White: Strong case for greater investment in police

"A distribution of just half a per cent of the 6 per cent of government expenditure from the defence budget to policing for example, would transform our ability to protect the public."

Mr White argued that the 2

if it just means cracking down indiscriminately ... Rather, Zero Tolerance policing requires partnership and it requires a clear focus on locally identified crime problems. Success will depend on being able to identify accurately what the crime problems are, and what efforts police actions are having."



Jan Buttel

The fast food chain has asked officials and suppliers to set up a system of tracing meat and guaranteeing that it conforms to standards laid down by the company. Under the Burger King Quality Assurance Scheme, all meat used by the company would come from the flank and forequarters of ani-

British beef will be re-introduced to the 420 Burger King outlets across the country in the next few weeks.

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news

The 'crumb' that could have exterminated the dinosaurs

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

An object like this may have brought an end to the reign of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

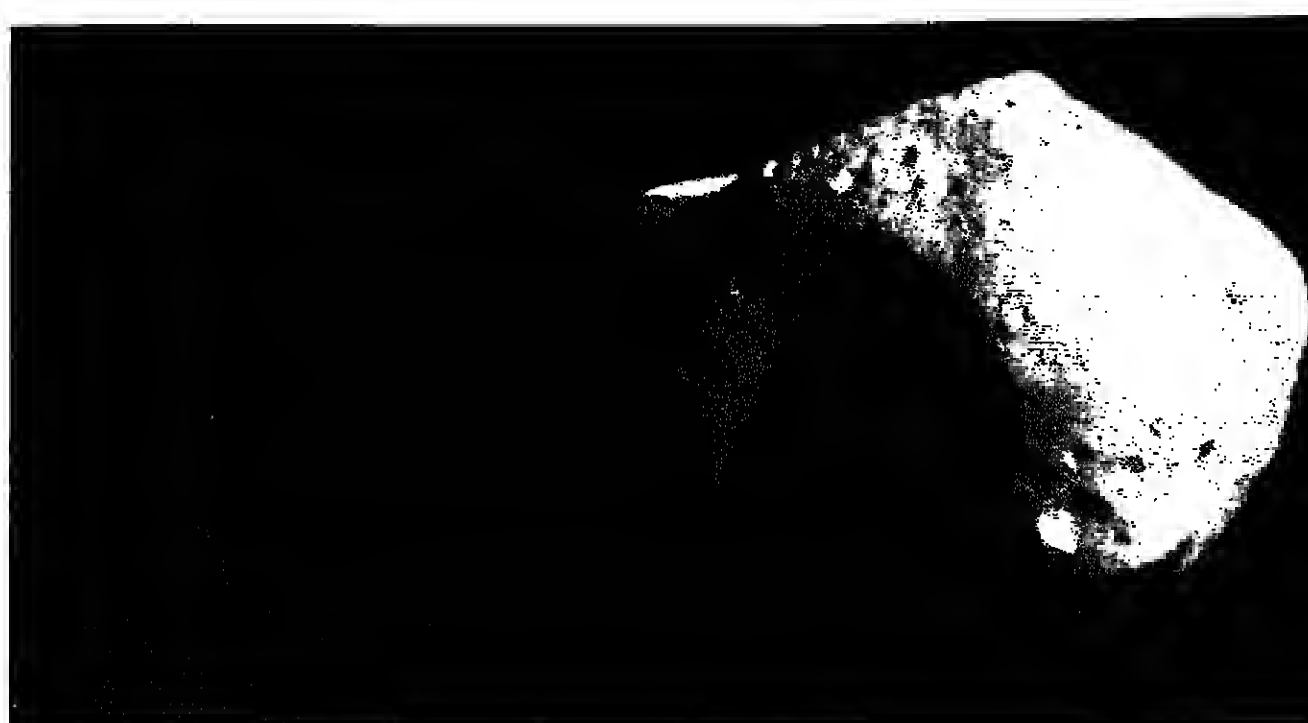
It is an interplanetary crumb, dating back to the formation of the solar system, which was never baked into the recipe of the rest of the planets; an asteroid, 33 miles across, whose surface reflects so little light that it is twice as dark as charcoal – meaning that only computer enhancement makes it visible.

The US space agency Nasa released the pictures, which were captured during a flypast of Asteroid 253 – or "Mathilde"

as it is better known. The images were taken by the Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous (Near) spacecraft, 186 million miles from the sun – beyond the orbit of Mars. The Near spacecraft passed just 750 miles from Mathilde.

Its irregular shape includes many impact craters – some almost half as wide as its diameter – and show that Mathilde has "a very tortured past," according to Donald Yeomans of Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, who heads the radio science team observing the object.

The Nasa scientists have been surprised by the size and depth of the craters in the asteroid. The fact that it has not



Rock of ages: Could this barely visible "interplanetary crumb" have ended the reign of the dinosaurs?

Photograph: NASA

broken apart, despite the apparent signs of damage, suggests that it is less dense, yet also more uniform, than a solid piece of rock.

The team have determined that it must be made of carbon-

rich material, and that it formed early in the creation of the solar system, but was not pulled in to any of the processes that formed the planets between 4 and 5 billion years ago.

Those would melt and mix

the materials of any object, making them increasingly reflective – that is, raising their albedo. The Earth, for example, reflects 33 per cent of the sun's light, meaning its albedo is 0.37. Mathilde rates just 0.03.

Mathilde lies, like millions of other asteroids, in the gap between Mars and Jupiter.

Occasionally some asteroids fall out of those orbits towards the planets; hundreds are believed to be scattered through-

out the solar system, some close enough to pose a threat to Earth.

Many scientists believe one such asteroid crashed into the Gulf of Mexico and caused drastic climate changes which

killed off the dinosaurs.

The data gathered in the latest fly-by may help scientists to detect them in future, and even to decide how best to deflect them from hitting Earth, if that becomes necessary.

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Ship was wrecked 'for view of the coast'

The world's oldest working sailing ship was wrecked on the Cornish coast with the loss of three crew when her owner-captain took her close inshore to admire the coastline, a court heard yesterday.

Despite knowing the exact well, Mark Litchfield steered the 137-year-old *Maria Asumpta* on the course, regardless of adverse wind and tide conditions, claimed the prosecution lawyer, Richard Lissack, at Exeter Crown Court yesterday.

The 125-foot-long two-masted square rigger went aground on the "treacherous coastline" at Rumps Point outside Padstow Harbour on 30 May 1995, and broke up "almost immediately", said Mr Lissack.

Mr Litchfield, from Boxley, Kent, has pleaded not guilty to the manslaughter of the three members of the 14-strong crew who died. They were: Anne Taylor, 51 of Wallingford, Oxfordshire, the ship's cook; second engineer John Shannon, 30, from Queensland, Australia; and Emily MacFarlane, 19, of Feltham, Surrey, an assistant bosun. The charges allege that Mr Litchfield, a former Royal Navy lieutenant, was in breach of a duty to take reasonable care of those who sailed in the vessel.

The prosecution lawyer said Mr Litchfield set the course, chose the route, decided all matters of navigation and ran all aspects of the vessel. "He would not brook any question of his authority," he told the court.

"Despite knowing the north Cornish coastline very well, he decided to take her close inshore regardless of the prevailing wind and tide which were adverse. He did this to admire the coastline, let those on

the cliffs admire the *Maria Asumpta*, and to use up some time as they were ahead of schedule," he said.

"In taking her close inshore, Litchfield put the vessel on a lee shore – a situation where the wind was blowing towards the shore to which you are close."

Mr Litchfield, he said, broke two of the golden rules of sailing. Always maintain a good distance off, and never get caught on a lee shore. Throughout that afternoon he had every chance to tack out to sea and put distance between the vessel and the shore. "He chose not to despite the obvious hazards that loomed," Mr Lissack told the jury.

"His navigation of the latter stages of the course was totally inadequate. He used the wrong charts, with no passage drawn, and no attempt to mark off no-go areas," said Mr Lissack.

Mr Litchfield "did not even take the simple step of ordering the crew to put on lifejackets despite the fact that the grounding of the vessel with the obvious risk to life was a possibility," Mr Lissack claimed.

Mr Lissack said a square-rig vessel was particularly vulnerable on a lee shore, and for some hours before her loss the *Maria Asumpta* was fighting adverse wind and tide and being progressively set in on a lee shore.

Mr Litchfield, who had bought the *Maria Asumpta* in 1980 after a film company asked him to provide two square-riggers, had no square-rigger specific qualifications, said Mr Lissack. But he knew more about sailing the *Maria Asumpta* than anyone else, and spoke of the vessel as "his baby". The case continues.

DAILY POEM

Song to 'Springtime in the Mansion of Jade' (Yu-lou chun)

By Yan Ji-dao (mid 11th – early 12th century)

*The east wind did it again, unsentimental
in its designs: it blew the land full of petals,
passionate red and feebly white.
High in green mansions curtain shadows won't block away
melancholy – same mood as last year
on the same day.*

*You'd never know how I've always botched
spring's last moments so badly, with wasted tears
climbing high places everywhere.
But this time I'll have my golden flagon
filled to the brim. How often drunk hereafter
will I watch the blossoms all fall away?*

Yan Ji-dao was the last master of the traditional Song Dynasty love lyric, associated with the singer-courtesans who worked in the "entertainment quarters" of cities such as the Song capital, Kai-feng. Stephen Owen's translations of Yan's poetry appear in his *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (Norton, £18.95).

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Kohl acts to quash revolt over the euro

Inure Karacs
Bonn

Chancellor Helmut Kohl sought to quell a Euro-sceptic rebellion in the government ranks yesterday by mortgaging his political future to hard-liners who insist on the strictest interpretation of the Maastricht criteria. Although Germany has no chance of keeping its budget deficit below 3 per cent this year, Mr Kohl insisted the goal remained within his reach. "We are sticking to three-point-zero. That is no problem. And within the schedule," he said in Munich. Addressing a conference of business leaders, his words were aimed primarily at Bavaria's Prime Minister, Edmund Stoiber, who has emerged as the most powerful adversary of economic and monetary union (EMU), even urging postponement if the criteria were not met. Mr Kohl had gone to Munich carrying a speech denouncing the "unhelpfulness" of government politicians who question the government's ability to deliver the magic numbers. But at a crucial point in the speech, he departed from the prepared text, serving up soothing words rather than admonition to his foe.

Mr Stoiber was generous in victory, welcoming Mr Kohl to the inner sanctum of the "three-point-zero" club with open arms. "I am happy that it will be three point zero," he said with not a hint of irony. Most economists, European governments and even the Bundesbank maintain that a few tenths of 1 per cent do not matter, and are perplexed by the Bavarians' "decimal-fetishism". "A euro that is permanently stable is in Germany's interests," the Bavarian leader declared last week. "To pursue a course of relaxing the standards would lead to a union of inflation and debt, and harm our nation, and ultimately European integration." Mr Stoiber went on to promise "fierce resistance" to German attempts to fudge the criteria - a thinly veiled threat to mobilise his MPs against monetary union. His remarks unleashed fury in the government. Mr Kohl let it be known discreetly that he was hopping mad. Wolfgang Gerhardt, leader of the Free Democrats, the third party making up the coalition, charged Mr Stoiber with "anti-euro populism". "The row could not have come at a worse time for Mr Kohl. The



Word games: Helmut Kohl and Edmund Stoiber clash at the Bavarian Entrepreneurs Congress in Munich

Photograph: AFP

recent confrontation with the Bundesbank has highlighted his government's inability to meet the Maastricht targets by honest means, and, by extension, its commitment to a hard euro. His conversion to 3.0 is likely to defuse the row for the moment, but stores up greater calamities for the future. Mr

Stoiber will not get off his hobby-horse, because the issue is part of a bigger game. In reality, decimals have nothing to do with the euro-debate, but a great deal with *realpolitik*. Mr Stoiber governs the most Euro-sceptic and most conservative Land in Germany. EMU is unpopular, especially among right-wing voters.

The ruling Christian Social Union is in danger of losing its absolute majority in next year's elections to the Bavarian assembly. The biggest threat to Mr Stoiber's survival comes not from the left, but from mushrooming anti-party alliances which are bitterly opposed to all things federal and European.

That is one reason why the CSU, whose MPs prop up Mr Kohl's government in Bonn, cannot afford to go soft on the euro. Reason number two is more Byzantine. The person widely blamed for Germany's failure to meet the criteria is the finance minister, Theo Waigel, also a Bavarian.

There is little love lost between the two CSU heavyweights, and Mr Stoiber seems to take pleasure in advertising his rival's shortcomings. The failure to deliver 3.0 this year will be the most obvious Waigel legacy, which is why Mr Stoiber will never let the magic number slip out of public sight.

Dutch to make brothels legal

Katherine Butler

The Dutch government is to legalise brothels in a move it says will help stem the growth of sex slavery and women-trafficking rackets operating out of Eastern Europe.

The Dutch Justice minister, Winnie Sorgdrager, who was tabling a decriminalisation Bill yesterday, said the decision was a mature response to a phenomenon which is here to stay. "The existence of prostitution is a fact which must also be accepted by the government. This demands a realistic approach to the problem."

Ms Sorgdrager hopes the change in the law will for the first time allow police and law enforcement agencies to regulate the sex industry and weed out the East European drug and organised crime rings who are thought to be controlling much of Holland's prostitution.

The Netherlands has for years adopted a policy of tolerance towards brothels. However, much though this might surprise tourists to Amsterdam's red-light area, brothels are still officially illegal. Under the Bill, which is expected to win majority backing in the Dutch parliament despite opposition from right-wing and Christian parties, brothels will become part of the mainstream taxpaying economy.

Brothel keepers will have to apply for permits to run their businesses from local councils and will be subject to close scrutiny.

Keeping a register of brothels will allow the authorities to keep a rigorous check on the identity of the 30,000 or so individuals working as prostitutes, half of whom are believed to be illegal immigrants. Penalties for illegal prostitution and child pornography rackets will be toughened under the new law.

European Commission officials who co-ordinate justice links between the member states are sceptical of the plans. "This is a peculiarly Dutch solution, and definitely not one which will be followed by other governments," commented one senior official.

Defeated Berisha's supporters cling to gun-power

Andrew Gumbel
Tirana

Die-hard supporters of Albania's President Sali Berisha vented their frustration over the ruling Democratic Party's crushing electoral defeat yesterday with an intimidatory show of force around Tirana. They showed special venom to foreign journalists in the capital by barging into news conferences with guns and throwing well-aimed punches. An Italian cameraman was beaten outside the Democratic Party's headquarters on Monday night and had his equipment stolen, as party faithful lurled accusations of bias at the foreign press. An observer for Human Rights Watch who had been critical of the Berisha

regime, Fred Abrahams, was slapped and kicked during a news conference yesterday given by two senior party figures, Genc Polli and Tritan Shehu. Joanna Robertson, a reporter for the BBC and the *Guardian*, was fired at several times by an unidentified man emerging from a Mercedes on a beach near Durres. She escaped unhurt after the owner of a nearby restaurant, who knew her, chased the man away with blasts from his Kalashnikov. Although President Berisha has urged his supporters to accept the election result, which handed an overwhelming victory to the opposition Socialist Party, the men with guns have managed to clear the streets a good hour before the start of curfew at 10pm.

On Monday night, men identified as members of the presidential guard drove up and down Tirana's main boulevard firing automatic weapons into the air. Another group climbed to the top of the Palace of Culture and created a cacophony of machine-gun fire and grenade explosions. Such behaviour is being interpreted as the last gasp of

an autocratic regime that knows the game is up. A number of notorious strongmen, including the police chief Agim Shehu and the head of the presidential guard, Xhabid Xhaferri, have left the country. President Berisha himself was described as looking dejected and lost by international officials who met him yesterday. The risk of serious disruption

nevertheless exists, especially during the limbo period before full election results are known. Yesterday the would-be king of Albania, Leka Zogu, gave a press conference accompanied by about 200 thugs, many of them armed, who chanted slogans and applauded as their hero complained he had been robbed of victory in Sunday's referendum on the reintroduc-

tion of the monarchy. Some of the thugs were identified as members of Mr Berisha's retinue. Complete results are not expected until today because of delays in communication between far-flung constituencies and the central electoral commission in Tirana. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe said

the count appeared to be conducted professionally. Latest indications suggested there would be more than 30 run-offs in the second round this Sunday, and up to 20 re-runs because of irregularities or outbreaks of violence. The Socialists still appeared to have a commanding majority, but not as big as the results announced by the party on Monday.

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international

'El Popo' tips ashtray into Mexico City smog

Phil Davison
Mexico City

The Aztecs named it Popocatepetl – the Smoking Mountain. When it blew its top on Monday night, its worst eruption since 1923, it spewed smoke, ash, red-hot grit and mud – not lava – but gave a fright to the 20 million residents of Mexico City and the surrounding valley.

The eruption sent a mushroom cloud of smoke six miles above the crater and covered the capital, 33 miles away, with soggy ash during an evening rain storm. The capital's international airport closed down overnight, with passengers getting an unexpected detour to the resort of Acapulco, as the muddy ash smeared airliners' wind-screens and endangered aircraft

engines. On the ground, low visibility caused at least one highway pile-up. Mexico City residents were advised to stay indoors or wear goggles and cover their noses if they went out. Many called emergency services for explanations of the strange cloud of wet ash that had replaced the city's renowned daytime smog.

It was as though someone had emptied a giant ashtray over the city and volcanologists said the rain had helped prevent a disaster. The state of Puebla, one of three states which the 17,890ft Popocatepetl straddles, declared a "red alert" emergency, preparing to evacuate tens of thousands of residents. Most refused, saying they feared looting of their homes, which happened during

the last evacuation in 1994.

Hundreds of people clogged roads out of one town, Amecameca, but most stayed home or flocked to churches to pray. In the village of Santiago Xalitzintla, many residents moved to higher ground after a volcanic mudslide, cooled by the rain, threatened lower-lying homes. Against the sound of the village church bells, a loud-speaker broadcast a priest's voice, urging residents to come in and pray that there not be the kind of full-scale eruption which could bury the village.

In Mexico City, some non-government experts criticised the authorities for playing down the danger and warned that neither the national nor state governments were prepared for a potential disaster.

Some 300,000 people, mostly farmers, live directly under the volcano – widely known as "el Popo" for short. It formed the backdrop to Malcolm Lowry's novel *Under the Volcano*.

The eruption began at 6pm – evening rush hour in Mexico City – on Monday and lasted half an hour. The soggy ash caused havoc on the capital's roads, bringing visibility down to 100 yards and forcing motorists to stop constantly to wipe their windcreens.

By yesterday the situation was returning to normal. Mexico City residents went back to work. Teachers came to work early to clear ash from school playgrounds. Hospitals were busy with people who had suffered burning eyes or sore throats.

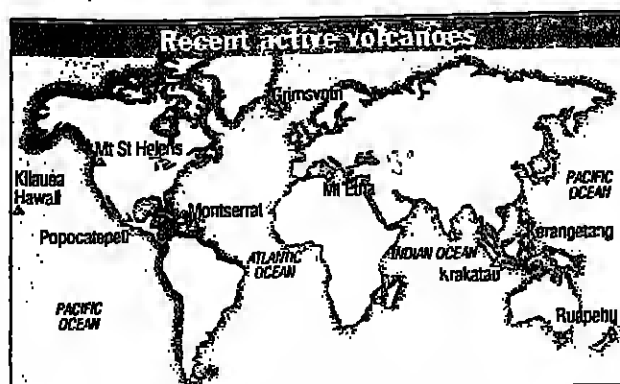
World's climate may change

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

Though it might seem suspicious, there is no connection between the volcanic eruptions in Soufriere Hills, Montserrat, and Popocatepetl in Mexico – apart from the accident of timing, and their effect on human populations. But it remains to be seen whether the Mexican eruption will have any effect on world climate; it might briefly slow global warming, but speed up the destruction of the ozone layer.

Nor are they isolated events. "At any time there are about 15 to 25 active volcanoes somewhere in the world, and on average 50 different volcanoes erupting every year," said Professor Stephen Sparks of the geology department at the University of Bristol.

Volcanoes are caused when pressures in molten magma below the Earth's crust break through weaknesses in the solid surface. Occasionally, the



eruption of an undersea volcano can cause a tsunami which can flood coastal areas.

Volcanoes can be created where solid crustal plates, floating on a magma layer in the lower crust and upper mantle, collide and one is forced above the other; the lower plate eventually starts to melt and its material rises up to erupt through the upper plate.

The Volcanic Explosivity Index (VEI), developed in 1982, gives eruptions a value between

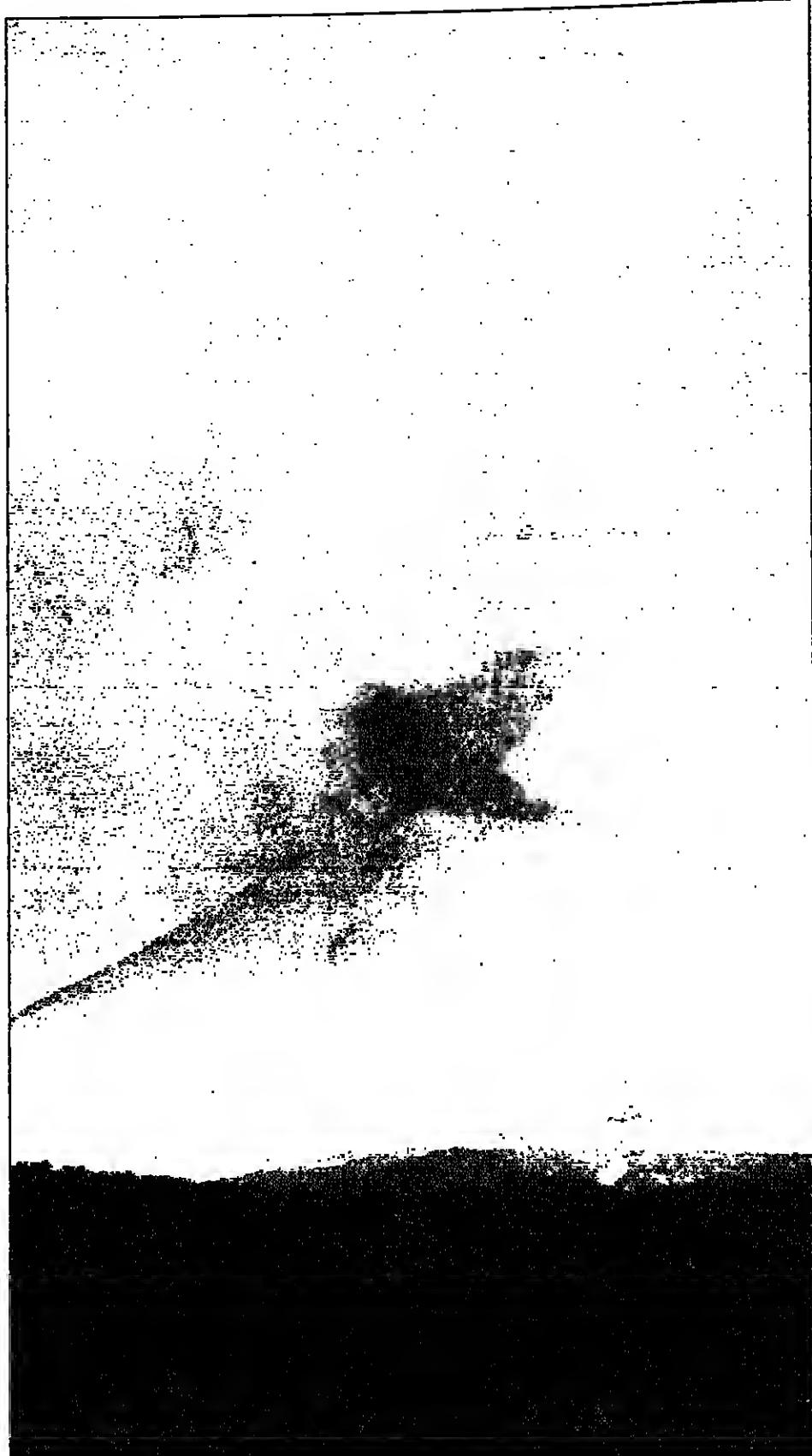
0 and 8, but is not wholly factual: it takes into account a general description (non-explosive to very large), cloud column height, qualitative description (gentle to cataclysmic), and eruption type.

The biggest eruption in recorded history occurred in 1815, when the Tambora volcano in Indonesia exploded (at an estimated VEI of 7), producing 40 cubic kilometres of ash. The eruption killed 10,000 people, and another 80,000

died from crop loss and famine. Eruptions can also have dramatic effects on world climate. When Mt Krakatoa, also in Indonesia, exploded in 1883, the following years were rainy and cold across Europe. Volcanoes can also effect the levels of ozone in the upper atmosphere.

The Montserrat volcano has been comparatively small, and the gases and ash emitted are not particularly acidic; thus its effects on world weather will be minimal. Popocatepetl may be a different matter. "It hasn't gone on long enough yet, but it is sulphur-rich, which means it will produce acidic particles," said Professor Sparks. "And it has pushed out ash to a fair altitude. But I suspect there's not yet enough expelled to cause global effects."

Despite the disruption and loss of life they cause, volcanoes can have benefits. Undersea ones can create entirely new land; and those upon the land, once their flows have cooled, can offer very rich soils for farming.



Smoking giant: The cone of Popocatepetl dominates the landscape of Puebla state. On Monday, an eruption spewed ash over Mexico City, 30 miles away. Photograph: AP

Up to 20 feared dead in island eruption

Oveston, Montserrat (Reuters)

— Montserrat officials fear as many as 20 people have been killed since a rumbling volcano rained superheated rocks and gas on the island.

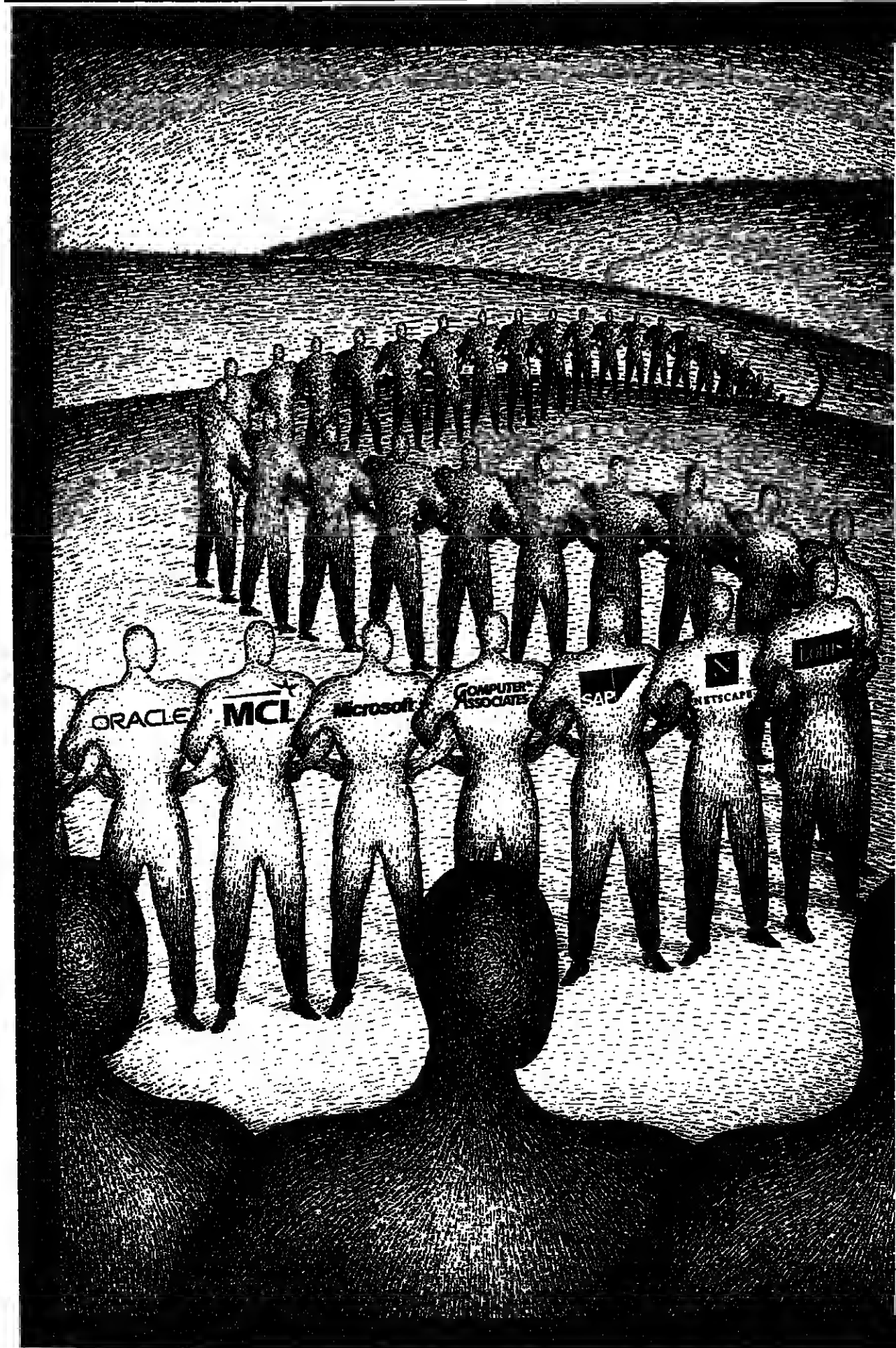
"It could be as high as 20 [dead]," Claude Hogan, a spokesman for the British territory's government said on Monday night. He spoke as new flows of extremely hot rocks and gases from the Soufriere Hills volcano, located in the southern part of the island, set more houses on fire. Deadly pyroclastic flows – fast-moving bursts of 500 Celsius volcanic material – devastated seven villages in southern Montserrat last Wednesday.

Mr Hogan said nine or 10 bodies had been recovered and officials were fairly confident another 10 people had been killed, though their bodies had not yet been found. The village of Farm's, which was razed almost to the ground in the disaster, we know," he said.

Mr Hogan said another 24 people were still considered missing.

Rock and ash surged down the volcano's south-western flanks at mid-afternoon on Monday, sending a dark cloud into the sky that obliterated the sun, and roaring through evacuated villages near Plymouth, Montserrat's capital. There were no reports of additional injuries.

Baroness Liz Symons, under-secretary of state with responsibility for the Caribbean, visited Montserrat on Sunday and Monday and reiterated the British government's commitment to giving financial support to the tiny island and to developing its northern third, which is considered safe.



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سكرا من الامم المتحدة

Up to 20 feared dead in island eruption

India's master of corruption plots his revenge

Peter Popham
Delhi

India's most scandalously bent politician, Laloo Yadav, Chief Minister of the impoverished state of Bihar, finally got his come-uppance on 27 April, when he was told he was to be prosecuted for his role in a £1.6bn embezzlement scandal.

On 21 July he is likely to be arrested. But he appears to have got partial revenge: the man responsible for the decision to prosecute him, Joginder Singh, Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), has been removed without warning from his post. Mr Yadav is the nightmare of Indian caste politics made flesh. The child of illiterate cowherds - Yadav is also the name of the caste, and cowherding their prescribed occupation - he took advantage of the crumbling of the Congress Party and the bitterness of Bihar's poor to become Chief Minister in 1990.

The secret of his appeal is simple: the idea, repeated like a mantra, that I am as you are. He slops about in white pyjamas, betel juice dribbling down his lips, cursing like a rustic roughneck. I am as you are, he says - and so saying he has plundered his home state with such ruthlessness that

Indians come away aghast. Roads are disintegrating and bandits roam the countryside; inter-caste violence is endemic. When he came to power, Mr Yadav's mandate was to improve the lot of the poor. So he has done: he distributed £34m of saris and dhotis to them. Once he met a beggar on the roadside and packed him off to a five-star hotel for a bath and meal.

He is Finance Minister as well as Chief Minister, and the scandals over which he has presided include a £300m theft from the bitumen fund, the transfer of £600m of state-owned land to a handful of builders and a £150m drugs scandal. But they are dwarfed by the siphoning of £1.6bn out of the state treasury through a fund intended to subsidise the purchase of animal fodder.

Although evidence was destroyed in a fire and potential witnesses died in suspicious circumstances, in April Mr Yadav learned he will not cheat justice indefinitely. After blustering and refusing to resign, he has apparently struck back. Mr Singh, who was responsible for the decision to prosecute Mr Yadav, was on Monday kicked sideways into the Home Ministry. That Mr Singh has been sacrificed despite Mr Yadav's waning influence is due to the fact that in his 11-month tenure he alienated nearly all the country's most powerful politicians.



Yadav: Enjoyed seeing his prosecutor sacked

Sex scandal saga swings in Clinton's favour

May Dejevsky
Washington

As the muddled saga of the President and Paula Jones - the Arkansas receptionist who alleges improper advances in a Little Rock hotel room - chatters slowly in the direction of the courtroom confrontation for which all America lusts, the balance of advantage is unexpectedly shifting in President Bill Clinton's favour.

that they regularly procured women for Mr Clinton while he was governor of Arkansas, and kept guard outside hotel rooms while he took his pleasure. They had supplied this information to the anti-Clinton magazine, *The American Spectator*, among others, which printed its exposé about Mr Clinton's Arkansas years soon after he came to office in 1993.



Stars: Bill Clinton at the show 'A funny thing happened on the way to the forum' in New York. Photograph: Reuters

significant shorts

Eta hostages freed after months in captivity

Two long-term hostages held by Eta terrorists were freed within hours of each other yesterday, in the most spectacular development for months in the Spanish government's campaign against Basque separatists. Cosme Delclaux, a lawyer from a prosperous Basque family, was found tied to a tree near Durango following a tip-off, after being held captive for more than seven months. Shortly afterwards, the prison officer Jose Antonio Ortega Lara was freed after a record 18 months in captivity, was freed after a raid by the paramilitary Civil Guard on an industrial warehouse near Mondragon. It is thought that security forces had located Mr Ortega's whereabouts weeks ago, and delayed a rescue operation until Mr Delclaux was safe. Mr Delclaux's family is reported to have paid a ransom of £50m some time ago. Elizabeth Nash - Madrid

Palestinians shot in 'pig' protest

Israeli soldiers shot and wounded at least 24 Palestinians in another flare-up of violence over posters depicting the Prophet Mohammad as a pig. Two Israeli soldiers were wounded in an explosion outside a Jewish settler compound in the divided West Bank city. Dozens of Arab youths broke away from a peaceful protest which Palestinian dignitaries called in response to the discovery of the posters, and threw rocks and petrol bombs at soldiers and settlers. Soldiers responded by firing rubber-coated metal bullets. Israeli police on Saturday arrested a 25-year-old Jewish woman from Jerusalem on suspicion of pasting the posters. Reuters - Hebron

Belarus bans private lawyers

Belarus' authoritarian president banned private lawyers from practice. President Alexander Lukashenko's order requires all lawyers to apply for a state licence if they want to continue working. The licensed lawyers will work with government-controlled associations of lawyers. The order also bans private notaries. AP - Moscow

gations to include Mr Clinton's past sex-life. This time, too, the information came from former state troopers, who said they had recently been questioned on the subject.

A third shift in Mr Clinton's favour was provided by the resignation of Daniel Traylor as Ms Jones's Arkansas lawyer. He said he disliked the approach of the Jones family, and complained that Ms Jones's charge - that she had observed "distinguishing characteristics" on Mr Clinton's private parts - had not featured in her original testimony to him. Thus is Ms Jones's veracity called into question.

The conjunction of these developments raises many questions. Why is the truthfulness of the troopers being challenged now? Did anyone suggest to Mr Traylor that he might step down? And what has Mr Clinton's lawyer, Bob Bennett, been doing recently?

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Hong Kong 香港 handover

Day one and the new recruits wake

Protest passes peacefully as Tung seeks to reassure

Teresa Poole
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's first day under Chinese rule brought the chance to rally against the Peking government, applaud new commitments on social welfare, and join in a mass sing-along aimed at setting a new world karaoke record. And all of this in torrential rain.

The afternoon demonstration, with a lead placard reading "Put an end to one-party dictatorship, build a democratic China", saw an estimated 3,000 people march in the first test of tolerance in the new era. It represented the first such protest on Chinese soil since the June 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. The protesters walked through the central business district, shouting "We want democracy, we want it now".

New legislation passed in the early hours of yesterday requires demonstrations to obtain prior permission from the police. This rally had secured an official go-ahead and, while there was a heavy police presence, it passed off peacefully.

As life attempted to get back to normal, Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's new leader, outlined in a lengthy speech the priorities for the new Special Administrative Region (SAR) government. After the previous day's emphasis on patriotism, Mr Tung yesterday got down to the business of how he intended to run Hong Kong, hopeful that by addressing the issues which dominate people's daily lives, he can begin to establish his legitimacy.

"Beneath the surface of prosperity, there are insidious threats which are taxing our courage and determination," Mr Tung warned. "We have to resolve a series of social problems arising from a growing and ageing population, meet the pressing demands for more and better

housing, and deal with the employment dislocation due to the restructuring of the economy."

Hong Kong's elderly "deserved respect", said Mr Tung. "We would encourage families to live with their elderly members, through adjustments to the public housing allocation policies," he added.

Mr Tung tried to balance calls for a better understanding of China with the need to reassure



'We strive for liberty, but not at the expense of the law'

Tung Chee-hwa

Hong Kong people that the territory's autonomy would be respected by Peking. "Due to our long separation, there is a general lack of understanding about China among the people of Hong Kong", and this must be addressed "to create mutual trust and respect".

On the question of Hong Kong's political development, he affirmed that "democracy is the hallmark of a new era for Hong Kong". He outlined an image of the sort of conservative Chinese society which he would like to create, while stressing that Hong

Kong was a cosmopolitan society and must retain its international outlook.

"We will continue to encourage diversity in our society, but we must also reaffirm and respect the fine traditional Chinese values including filial piety, love for the family, modesty and integrity, and desire for continuous improvement. We value plurality, but discourage open confrontation. We strive for liberty, but not at the expense of the rule of law. We respect minority views, but are mindful of wider interests. We protect individual rights, but also shoulder collective responsibilities," he said.

President Jiang Zemin also adopted a less jingoistic tone than on Monday night, seeking this time to reassure Hong Kong that it would retain a distinct system from the mainland for 50 years. He spoke of an "ultimate aim" of Hong Kong having an elected chief executive and legislature - but gave no idea of the acceptable timescale. He too offered an inclusive message for Hong Kong's non-Chinese residents, promising that "everyone will be entitled to the rights and freedom as protected by law, regardless of race or colour".

As the first day under Chinese rule drew to a close last night, there was still enough energy left for another party. Up to a million people lined both sides of Victoria Harbour for a HK\$100m (£7.8m) extravaganza laser and firework show, which saw 20 tonnes of explosives light up the night sky. And, being Hong Kong, there was something a little different to wind up the evening. The organisers orchestrated a city-wide sing-along, in pursuit of an accolade fit for the new era - a Guinness Book of Records entry for the world's largest mass karaoke.



Test of tolerance: Some of the 3,000 demonstrators on the streets of Hong Kong yesterday calling for the end of China's 'one-party dictatorship' Photograph: Reuters

Worries temper the optimism

Steve Crawshaw
Hong Kong

And now, what? That question now hangs over Hong Kong. But there is little chance of a speedy answer.

This will be a period of testing the limits, on both sides. Thousands of Hong Kongers tested the limits yesterday, demonstrating under the slogan "Build a democratic China!" There were no arrests - as there would have been, within seconds, if such a protest march had taken place in mainland China. But it was clear from the start that change will be much more gradual, when it comes.

Mainland China, which has never administered a free-thinking society even at one remove, will undoubtedly try to see with how far it can push Hong Kongers. "One country, two systems" is the official pledge. On the economy, China has no reason to kill the golden-egg-laying goose, by tampering with Hong Kong's money-making possibilities. On politics, however, it is still unclear whether China understands that politically free-range eggs are liable to be much tastier.

Lee Cheuk-yan, an organiser of yesterday's protest march in Hong Kong, insisted that there was a basic principle at stake. "What we've done in the past, we should be able to do in the future." New public order laws, passed by Hong Kong's new China-appointed legislature, make it more difficult to protest. And yet the official line appears to be that all will still be allowed. And yet, Tung Chee-hwa, the new Peking-approved chief executive, spoke in ambiguous terms yesterday when he talked of valuing plurality, but discouraging "open confrontation".

It would be wrong to describe Hong Kong today as a place of pessimism. There is general satisfaction at the obvious truth: Hong Kong belongs to China, just as it always should have done. Trickier is the question of whether Hong Kong wishes to be part of the People's Republic of China - in other words, subject to the regime which currently rules China. That regime believes itself to be eternal, but may in reality have a finite lifespan.

Hong Kong is a place causing worries, combined with extraordinary optimism. Many Hong Kongers are grateful for what the outgoing governor Chris Patten, did for democratic rights in Hong Kong. Many ways, however, the final parting of the Mr Patten and the removal of the last royal cross across the territory, make it easier for Hong Kongers. Now they can roll up their sleeves not just economically but also politically, knowing that the future lies in their own hands, and is not infected by anybody, benevolently or otherwise, from London.

Theoretically, the future does not just depend on Hong Kong. Yesterday, the Chinese flag was being raised on official buildings all over Hong Kong. China, I can be argued, might change Hong Kong's future with just a few tanks, if it decided that the democrats were becoming too bold - just as Moscow sought to do in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or as China itself did, when lethally crushing the Tiananmen democracy movement in 1989. But the Soviet invasion rebounded on Moscow. And the chapter on the legacy of Tiananmen is by no means finished. Peking's official version is that Tiananmen Square is now forgotten by all in China. But Peking's actions in suppressing dissent make it clear that China itself knows this to be a lie.



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New order: The PLA rumbling through the streets of Sheung Shui, New Territories, in the early hours of yesterday morning. Photograph: David Rose

Why a charmed land will still work its magic

I am starting to wonder whether I am the English Patient. So, I am asking my friends and well-meaning people keep asking me if I am all right. How do I feel? What am I going to do?

They ask because it is assumed that as a long-time resident of Hong Kong I should feel both saddened and worried by the departure of the British regime. We Brits are presumably expected to leave, trailing somewhere in the wake of *Britannia* as it carries the Prince of Wales and Chris Patten part of the way back to Blighty.

Of course the change of sovereignty is momentous and, let's face it, it will never be the same for the Brits again.

Some of the things which will go should have gone long ago. It is absurd that Chinese defendants and plaintiffs should have to stand in a court of law conducted entirely in a foreign language.

It is equally absurd that British people should have special residence privileges, and how can anyone defend a system, which is anyway almost extinct, under which British expatriates were paid more than their Chinese counterparts, while knowing less?

So, goodbye, and good riddance, to all that. Hopefully it does not mean hello to discrimination against all things British. I rather think it does not. These last few, pretty wrenching days have revealed a surprisingly warm attitude to the departing colonial power. I say surprisingly because, in my experience, the word that generally sums up attitudes to things British is indifference. I have never had what might be described as an "anti-British experience". This seems remarkable because there is a certain logic to a colonised people feeling ill-disposed towards their colonisers.

However, and here's the rub: Hong Kong Chinese people do not act or feel like a people under colonial occupation. There is very little of that colonial cringe which was a major feature of Britain's other imperial adventures. On the contrary, the Chinese in these parts can be every bit as haughty, self-confident and arrogant as the Brits who still believe that God is an Englishman.

The departing Governor, Chris Patten, described Hong Kong as a "Chinese society with British characteristics". He has a point; but the over-

Stephen Vines reveals why he has no intention of quitting his home

ture of Britain's other imperial adventures. On the contrary, the Chinese in these parts can be every bit as haughty, self-confident and arrogant as the Brits who still believe that God is an Englishman.

The departing Governor, Chris Patten, described Hong Kong as a "Chinese society with British characteristics". He has a point; but the over-

It is hard to believe I am now living under a regime controlled by the Communist Party

whelming impression I have always had about Hong Kong is that it is essentially a Chinese society. It may well have been called a British colony until yesterday but I have always felt very much a foreigner, even after many years of residence.

It is hard to imagine Hong Kong will become that much more Chinese, and that people like me will feel that much more alien. Nevertheless, I expect the culture to become more self-consciously Chinese. But I hope, perhaps naively, that a self-confident Chinese culture will be sufficiently secure to more easily accommodate foreign influences.

We have been waiting for the handover so long that there was always a danger it might be an anti-climax. It was not. Despite

the vulgarity of some of the celebrations, the goon-like behaviour of some senior Chinese officials, and the rather gauche ceremony marking Britain's departure, only the most drearily cynical person could fail to sense the feeling of history in the making.

It is hard to believe that I am now living under a regime controlled by the Chinese Communist Party and it certainly does not seem very real.

I woke up to hear Martin Lee, the Democratic Party's leader, saying on the radio that he was resolutely determined not to concede that things had to change. He said he drove to the studio in the same car, down the same roads and met the same people he has met before. Why therefore should he change his ways?

If the man branded as a subversive by the Chinese government sees no need to change his ways, I find it hard to believe that a lowly Brit living deep in Hong Kong's breathtaking countryside needs to see the new era as an occasion for major upheavals.

Yet there is an expectation that I should be thinking of leaving. Even people I do not know, ask me if I'm intending to go. Maybe they know something which I don't. Maybe this will no longer be a place for foreigners, especially those who earn a living from reporting the news. Not knowing what the future hold seems to be an insufficient reason for assuming the worst or, even more foolishly, to start jumping before being pushed. Inertia has always served me very well in the past. I trust that even in the new Hong Kong it will work its magic one more time.

All I really know is that this place has been extremely good to me. I've had opportunities to do things here which I simply could not dream of doing in Britain. The reason why this is so is not because I am somehow special - it is because Hong Kong is very special indeed.

Letters, page 19

Peking turns attention to Taiwan

Ted Plafker
Peking

Within hours of returning to Peking after taking possession of Hong Kong, China's top leaders set their sights on Taiwan, the most elusive prize in their quest to fully reunite their country.

Both Premier Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin, speaking in Peking yesterday, urged Taiwan to consider following in Hong Kong's footsteps back to the embrace of the mainland's Communist regime.

Speaking to several thousand guests at an afternoon reception in Peking's Great Hall of the People, Mr Li praised the "one country, two systems" formula under which Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty.

He said the formula, devised by the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, is suitable for Hong Kong and Macau and, he added, "it can also work for Taiwan".

Before a crowd of more than 70,000 gathered in Peking's Workers' Stadium for yet another gala celebration, Mr Jiang likewise urged Taiwan to consider reunification. "We hope that the Taiwan authorities will, setting store by the overall interests of our nation, truly return to the one China position," Mr Jiang said.

Taiwan, seen by Peking as a renegade province since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949, has long rejected any suggestion of reuniting with anything but a democracy. Officials reiterated their unwillingness to contemplate such a move with China under its existing system.

"The Republic of China government

[on Taiwan] will never accept such a formula," government spokesman David Lee said after Mr Jiang hailed the "one country, two systems" concept as a model for Taiwan.

Taiwan Vice President Lien Chan, meanwhile, said reunification would become possible only if the mainland adopts multiparty democracy, a formula Mr Lien called "one country, one good system".

Yesterday, Peking was unusually quiet as residents took advantage of a second consecutive day off to recover from a long night spent celebrating the handover. Few cars plied the city's streets, and morning papers were late in reaching the newsstands, but Pekingers remained excited about the dramatic events that continued unfolding in Hong Kong.

"I stayed up watching television until six this morning so I could see the army cross over into Hong Kong," said a woman who did not have the day off from her work as a street sweeper.

"I feel very proud today, and I think all Chinese people must feel proud too," she said.

In full agreement, the Communist Party newspaper *People's Daily* proclaimed that now "is the right time for the Chinese nation to wipe out the disgrace of the past more than 150 years and feel proud and elated".

State-run television continued rebroadcasting highlights from its marathon overnight coverage of the midnight formalities and of the rain-soaked daybreak entry into Hong Kong of 4,000 People's Liberation Army troops.

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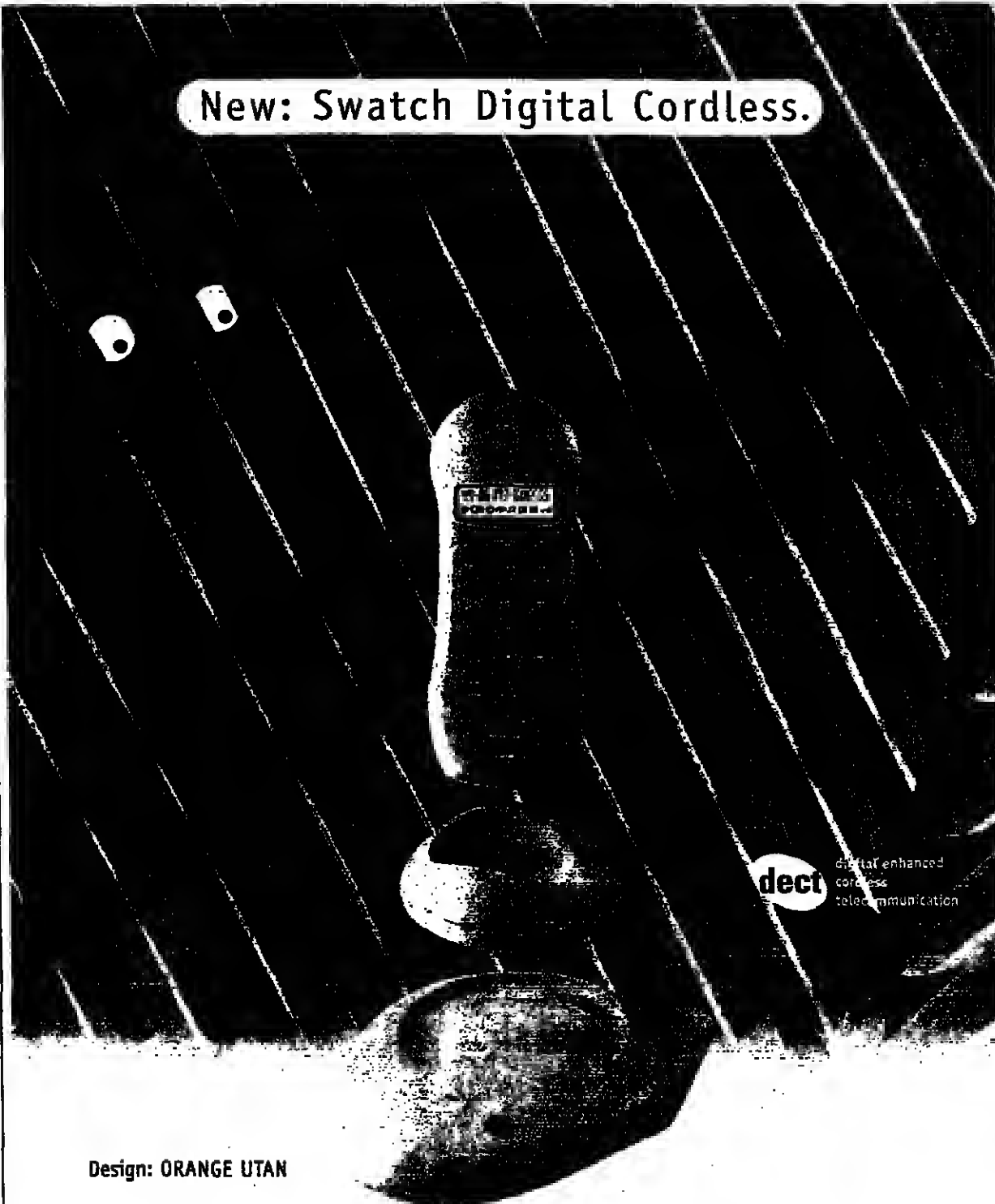
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On sexual equality, we should agree to differ

Can you, in all honesty, imagine a society in which the relationship between men and women is equal in all significant respects? First, rephrase the question in the form that it is usually answered; can you imagine a world in which labour is evenly divided, men taking their fair share of domestic responsibilities, women having equivalent access to all kinds of formal employment?

Put like that, well, yes, of course you can. It would obviously be possible to organise society in that way if individual people, organisations, companies, families, and everything else remotely human could be persuaded to ditch aeons of social baggage. It is also perfectly possible (indeed, right) to take the view that we should reorganise our lives and reinvent our institutions in the direction of greater equality. How can anyone seriously doubt that we will be a happier society if people are more able to realise their lives fully, women enjoying the rewards of open access to a broad social life, men deepening their emotional lives by being with children, and so forth?

Thus, when a researcher reports to the British Psychological Society that working fathers do not behave like new men (rare nappy changes, not a lot of cooking, come home late, doesn't look after the kids when they're ill) you can see all the women in the audience

groaning, "Yeah, tell me something I don't know already." But, even though that particular feminist ambition of equality is far from being achieved, it is increasingly clear that it does not represent the whole question - either for men or women. Increasingly we find ourselves concerned with a more fundamental uncertainty. Are men and women profoundly, ineluctably different? Are our circuit boards wired according to completely different plans? And if they are, is it possible that there are ways in which equality is a meaningless notion in the relationship between the sexes?

Instinctively, an awful lot of us think that our brains, our behaviours, our abilities and predispositions, are different in predetermined ways. But we don't actually know. Take the report only a week or two ago about the probability that there is a genetic predisposition in women to be more adept at communicating and co-operating, while there is a converse predisposition among men to drive for lone achievement. Reporting of this research finding attracted considerable comment, partly because (as ever) scientists were irritated that newspapers (including *The Independent*) should render their findings in terms that enabled lay folk to get a handle on the subject. So, we reported that boys will be boys and girls will be girls because that is what their chromosomes dictate. Actually, of course, the researchers were quite properly more cautious than that. But in some respects the most interesting thing is that no one really thought this was a particularly controversial or necessarily challenging thought. It conformed so precisely with widespread expectation that few people became exercised about it.

Take another example. We reported in some detail this week research into women's newspaper reading habits, and what female newspaper executives think about the material that newspapers carry. Naturally enough,

because men mostly dominate news output, and because women mostly say they want to read about things other than conventional news "events", there is an assumption that news is distorted by being male-oriented. Does that necessarily follow? It might, or it might not, depending on whether women actually want news at all - or something else. The idea of laying an even ground may be beside the point.

So here we are, making vast assumptions about our fundamental nature, without really having much evidence to point to the truth. In America, in

particular, many research scientists believe that the ancient nature/nurture argument might be far more resolvable than we think. Technology now enables us to scan brains in ways that may identify a wide range of "soft-wired" differences, including intelligence, social and sexual differences. But there is a great reluctance to support such research in the open: it is largely hidden from view, for fear that it will upset our cherished presumptions.

What are we scared of? First, just suppose, purely for the sake of argument, that women do indeed have a genetic predisposition to be more co-operative in their social relations than men, and that men, conversely, are more likely to adopt aggressive postures. Why is the one propensity necessarily "better" than the other? Surely there are obvious situations in which the male propensity to go solo and compete is more useful than the female propensity to compromise, just as the reverse of this is true. Remember, second, that we are, like other species, highly adaptable. We may be able to rewire some parts of ourselves rather quickly, but hopelessly incapable of altering others.

So, if men and women are actually slightly different animals, who fulfil complementary roles, but also run up against each other (excuse the metaphor) in different ways, isn't

that an important and useful way to understand ourselves? The more open-minded we can be about the way in which we interrelate, the better, and that may very well mean that men should no more become women than women should become men.

A sticky wicket for Mr Major

It does look suspiciously as if John Major is in denial. No, I wasn't Prime Minister, no, not at all, you see. First he wants to clear off sharply, leaving his party to flounder about miserably in an all-too-hasty search for his successor - an argument from which Mr Major conspicuously absented himself, as the candidates attempted to distance themselves from him. Now that can't have been fun, and you have to have some sympathy: such devastating defeat takes time to assimilate. But then he chooses to stay at home to attend the Denis Compton memorial rather than go to Hong Kong. Given the choice between saluting a cricketing great, and bidding farewell to Britain's remaining vestiges of Empire, Mr Major knew where his heart lay: half-way down the 22-yard green stretch. Looks almost too fitting a conclusion.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fans unjustly blamed for Hillsborough

Sir: I was dismayed and incensed to read Michael Roberts's letter (28 June) suggesting that the crowd were responsible for the crush at Hillsborough. This maligns a large number of innocent people.

The design of the Leppings Lane end was likely to encourage such a crush. The area was divided into three pens, with access to the central pen via the tunnel and side pens by the ends. Since access to all three was from the area behind the turnstiles with no further control, it would be impossible to control numbers in each pen even before the gates bypassing the turnstiles were opened. Because the obvious way in was through the tunnel and most people wish to stand behind the goal, most would attempt to enter the centre pen and few would enter the side pens to which entrance was less obvious.

At some other grounds this would be unlikely to happen. At Wembley when there was terracing each standing area was separately ticketed. At Anfield on the Kop there were no fences dividing the standing area into pens.

Any individual in a crowd has little control over his movement. That has led to the other crush disasters such as Ibrox and the wartime accident in the London Tube. To suggest that those who formed the crowd were responsible is absurd. I am sure that given information they would have acted responsibly, but they could not possibly have known of problems at the front: indeed they could suppose that those controlling the ground had a duty to ensure that the pens were not overfilled.

Regrettably, even in these days of all-seater grounds, it could still happen, as all clubs do not issue tickets for specific seats. Fortunately we no longer have fences, so the results are unlikely to be as serious.

I trust Mr Roberts will accept that a crowd will always act in this way (rather like water) and ceases to be a group of individuals with individual will.

RICHARD PEARSON
Cardiff

Sir: Michael Roberts states that those who "tried to cram themselves into the already overcrowded terraces" should take the blame for causing the Hillsborough tragedy irrespective of "other factors involved in the disaster".

It was precisely these "other factors" which led to supporters trying to enter the massively overcrowded middle pen of the Leppings Lane end of the ground. For instance, the decision to open an exit gate, and admit many fans, without even checking tickets, or South Yorkshire Police's ignorance of closed-circuit television evidence, which showed a potential crushing situation within the middle pen, while the two adjacent pens remained easily accessible.

If supporters had been directed by stewards or policemen towards less congested areas on their entry to the ground, 96 people might still be alive today.

A KELLY
Manchester

Sir: On a sunny spring morning in 1989, my husband set out to attend a football match. That night, someone completely different came home and our lives had been irrevocably changed.

BUDGET FORECAST



The enormity of the tragic deaths of men, women and children at Hillsborough has rightly overshadowed the multitude of other personal tragedies which arose out of that day. Thousands of people present were devastated by the trauma they experienced and witnessed. Many carry the guilt, not of having caused what happened, but of having survived. This, regardless of the fact that it had not been for the prompt and selfless action of fans both inside and outside the pens, many more would have died.

Michael Roberts (letter, 28 June) need not concern himself about the police "taking representation" from these people. West Midlands Police did that last time. The fans were exonerated by the Taylor inquiry report. The uninformed interpretations of what happened that day, begun by West Yorkshire Police and *The Sun* newspaper and perpetuated by such as Mr Roberts, continue to cause pain to those already suffering. A new inquiry and reopened inquiries on those who died will finally nail the myth that football fans were culpable.

PAT AYERS
Liverpool

Sir: Your correspondent ("Straw sets up review of football tragedy", 27 June) incorrectly reports on a material fact.

She writes: "The Crown Prosecution Service has studied video footage discovered in the archives of Yorkshire Television which South Yorkshire Police previously said was of too poor quality to make available to the Taylor inquiry or to the inquest."

That is wrong. The video footage in question is from police tapes

which were made available to Lord Justice Taylor and HM coroner for the inquest.

Their also being made available to Yorkshire Television subsequent to the inquiry by the South Yorkshire Police is also significant collateral for our assertion that there is no "cover-up" as popularly alleged in some quarters. The inquiry ordered by the Home Secretary will lay this particular confusion to rest.

RICHARD WELLS
Chief Constable
South Yorkshire Police
Sheffield

A chance missed in Hong Kong

Sir: We may well feel melancholy over the proceedings in Hong Kong. Much British bad faith has been involved.

As a member of the British Army, I arrived in Hong Kong in 1946, in time to see the Japanese war memorial blown up. Hong Kong was then something of a slag heap. The British routinely treated the Chinese as an inferior race, but that inferior race set about rebuilding their splendid island and their trade. It became the most amazing futuristic city on the globe.

The British government would not give the Hong Kongers British passports. They might have wished to come and live in our chilly island. But what a chance was missed. We should have leased

those energetic people the Isle of Wight for 99 years. In just 10 years' time, we would have had a mighty new Hong Kong off the south coast of England.

BLIAN ALDISS
Oxford

Sir: I was glad to read the letter from Drummond Hunter (30 June). The fact that Hong Kong has been handed over to China by Britain and not by some other power is due to the action of one relatively unknown man at the end of the war in the Far East.

The Rev J Ernest Sandbach, a minister of the Methodist Church, went as a missionary to Hong Kong in 1938 and, in addition to his church work, he was responsible for the Sailors' and Soldiers' Home and was officiating minister for Services personnel.

Following the invasion by the Japanese in 1941 he organised hospital supplies and then, with other civilians, was interned in the camp on the Stanley peninsula in 1942. He continued his missionary work as far as possible in the camp and was appointed chairman of the camp committee and, as such, represented the interests in negotiations with the Japanese authorities, often at great personal risk to himself.

Hearing of the imminent surrender to the Allied Forces in 1945, he marched out of the camp with the Colonial Secretary and a Chinese coast skipper and went to the Japanese officer in charge and told him he was taking over Hong Kong as a British colony. Very

soon after he was told by the Allied HQ to take over Hong Kong in the name of the four Allies. He replied, informing them that he had already taken over Hong Kong in the name of Great Britain and "so it has remained" he told me with a smile years later. He stayed in Hong Kong until 1960 and for his work there he was awarded the OBE on his return to England.

I had known his name for years before I met him in 1974 when I came to Selkirk and found he had retired here. We became very good friends and he gave me willing help in my work until I retired in 1987. Later I had the privilege of giving thanks to God for his life and work at his funeral in May 1991.

The Rev F R DOWSON
Selkirk, Chichester

The best ways to treat pain

Sir: Suzanne Moore ("Whose death is it anyway?", 27 June) has done little to help those of us who are struggling to educate the medical profession in the management of pain, never mind the general public.

I can appreciate the agonies undergone by your correspondent having acute low back pain and the lack of skills by the accident and emergency team in the management of her problem. However, she fails to understand the distinction between acute, chronic and malignant pain. Acute

low back pain is recognised as being a national priority in terms of management, because of the rising number of cases reported and unfortunately for Ms Moore hospital admission for analgesia is not recommended. The recent report of a multi-disciplinary Clinical Standards and Advisory Group recommends that people should remain mobile and return to work quickly, so that their condition does not become chronic.

It would appear that your correspondent feels that opiate analgesia should be administered at the drop of a hat even if it is not thought to be effective in managing some types of pain (including cancer pain). There is a distinct place for the use of opiate analgesics, however it should be recognised that there are different types of pain and some pain responds better to non-conventional analgesics than to opiates.

Some pain will never disappear, despite any drugs, operations or nerve blocks. This pain is real and still requires help, but the patient must learn to manage their pain rather than seeking the magic cure. This may require psychological rather than medical intervention.

I accept that pain is a very real problem and is probably the commonest cause for a patient to consult a doctor. However, the real problem is recognising the type of pain and prescribing the correct treatment - this often does not include opiate analgesics.

Dr KEITH A MULLIGAN
Clinical Director, Pain Management
Directorate
South Tees Acute NHS Trust
Middlesbrough

Late nights at the library

Sir: The decline in the use of public libraries is not just due to them purchasing too few books ("Use of libraries declines as cuts limit new books", 30 June). Library hours in our own London borough,

Camden, have been severely cut over the years. Even worse, opening times are out of touch with current working hours and the spread of commuting: my own branch, the borough's flagship, normally closes at six, with one "late night" opening - to 7pm. Having "grown up" in my local library, I particularly regret that my schoolboy son cannot go there after tea, as I used to, given how long it now takes even children to get home. On Saturdays, meanwhile, the desperate scramble of teenagers with project work besieging an under-staffed inquiry desk can put off library users of other ages.

Better funding alone might not help here. Many councils are keener on buying computer gadgetry for their libraries than on improving access for working residents. This is not to say they are unaware of the problem: when I phoned Camden's deputy director a few weeks ago, she confirmed that a survey of library users had shown great demand for longer opening hours. Reassured, I asked how the council would respond to these findings.

The answer was that Camden would conduct another survey on the subject at some point in the future. Internet facilities, on the other hand, are to be introduced very soon.

E FALLIS
London NW8

Free for a day

Sir: Eleanor Boyle (Letters, 30 June) will be pleased to know that we at Dulwich Picture Gallery operate exactly the Continental free day system, which she advocates. Normally the Gallery costs £3 or £1.50 concession, with free admission for children and the unemployed; on Friday it is free for all. England's oldest public art gallery receives no revenue funding from the state.

We cannot live without admission charges; on the other hand we cannot countenance excluding any part of the public for whom our founders bequeathed their magnificent collection back in 1811.

DESMOND SHAW-TAYLOR
Director, Dulwich Picture Gallery
London SE21

Uncouth in Paris

Sir: John Lichfield is astonished that he has not been invited into a French home yet (Paris Days, 28 June). How many French people has he invited into his home? This is not meant to be a flip remark; in France, that's the way round it is. It is the newcomer who has to make the first move.

It's no good standing around waiting to be recognised: people will just think you're uncouth.

KEITH EDGERLEY
Aigues-Mortes, France

Ecstatic roulette

Sir: George Howarth (letter, 28 June) asserts that "Drugs destroy lives... taking an Ecstasy tablet is like playing Russian roulette". Is Russian roulette actually illegal?

VAL URTONE
Northill, Bedfordshire

essay

Saying sorry is in fashion: from slavery to famine in Ireland, Western leaders are expressing regret. But how can we tell when they mean it, asks Andrew Brown

Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah*, which described the Holocaust in the words of its perpetrators as well as its survivors, taught one unforgettable lesson: how weak is the power of conscience in human faces. The camera closed in again and again for the narrative close-ups, and again and again the pictures told their story independently of the words. Survivors of the camps were, for the most part, furtive, marked: guilty. By contrast, their persecutors were solid men, with cheeks and brows as smooth as cold pork fat.

Those who had suffered seemed to feel they owed the world an apology for surviving; but the hitlers, the men who stoked the ovens or read by the light of lampshades made with human skin, had an unshakable self-confidence. No doubt they concealed their pangs when these were unfashionable; quite probably you would have found no more fervent anti-Nazis in 1946. But you could not imagine those men uttering any apology that meant more than "I am sincerely sorry that we lost, and I regret from the bottom of my heart that I was caught."

However, there is another form of apology – a sincere gesture made from a position of power. Such actions are extremely rare, but they haunt the various discussions this year



Guilty memories (clockwise from top left): the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1938; the Irish potato famine of 1846-48; the slave trade, which ended in America 132 years ago; the Catholics burning the Protestant John Rogers in 1555. Hulton Getty; Mary Evans Picture Library



version of an apology: an expression of regret without an acknowledgement of responsibility. He was very sorry the potato famine happened. This is not really a controversial position. Even at the time, few Englishmen rejoiced in the famine. They just believed, mistakenly, that they could do as little about it as Blair can now.

The real interest of Blair's apology for the potato famine is the Unionist reaction: that once the British or Protestant side starts to apologise for the death of Catholics, it is difficult to draw the line. Why not apologise for Cromwell? Or for Henry II, who first sent knights into the Pale? Worse yet, the regret over the potato famine seems to suggest that the Government might apologise for Bloody Sunday, when 13 rioters were shot in Londonderry in 1972. Such a gesture would be upsetting precisely because no one would believe it was a sincere apology from a position of strength. It would be taken as insincere, and revealing a position of weakness. You cannot expect the IRA to recognise sincerity in anyone else's apology when they themselves have produced the most transparently unregretful expressions of regret in history. Hatred and anger turn out to be nearly as hard to decommission as guns – and just as easy to store until they are needed again. It may be impossible to bring a war to an end without realising that both sides have much to apologise for, but acting on that realisation is impossible while the war persists. It's a logjam.

Nowhere is the logjam worse than in the United States, where there are serious demands for an apology for slavery. What makes this particularly difficult is that the US is such a Christian country, where the tradition of public repentance is well established; and the civil rights movement grew out of the church. So there are a lot of potential recipients of the apology who feel it could be a moment of grace. Here, for example, is Donna Britt, writing in *The Washington Post*. "An apology is less a choice than a decision. Deciding to apologise – even for something as monumental and as devoid of living perpetrators as slavery – can be powerful, even miraculous. Like true forgiveness, a heartfelt apology transcends politics and practicality. It is spiritual."

But where some see an occasion of grace, others see an occasion of money: for if an apology comes, can reparations be far behind? Ten years ago, a black politician proposed a commission of reparations for slavery – an institution that ended 132 years ago – which would decide what was owed to blacks for the crimes committed against their ancestors, and passed on down. It is difficult to imagine anything that would do more to perpetuate the fears and hatreds than an apology can sometimes how away. But if it's to do that, we have to be very clear that the only apologies worth having are those that are freely given.

Apologising for history

about who should or should not apologise for what.

Mike Tyson's expression of sincere regret to absolutely everyone in the universe is only the most recent demonstration that 1997 is going to be the year of the apology. After the Second World War, the rule was clear: only the losers had to apologise, but they had to apologise for everything. Now, however, there seems to be no government safe from the demand.

This year alone, the Czech government has apologised to Germany for throwing out the Sudeten Germans after the Second World War; and the German government has once more apologised to the Czechs

for invading them in 1938. The American government has apologised to blacks who were used in medical experiments. Tony Blair has almost apologised for the potato famine. The ecumenical body Churches Together in England has apologised for slavery, racism, the Crusades, Catholics burning Protestants, Protestants disembodying Catholics, and most of the rest of life's rich tapestry.

Only the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, has huffed this trend: he refused demands to apologise for the removal from their families, earlier this century, of up to 100,000 Aborigine children who were sent to missions or

foster homes, or used as slave labour. To apologise, he explains, would open the government up to claims for compensation, and then where would it be? "Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control," he said. This sounds perfectly reasonable, until you reverse the image. Does he get up on Anzac day and claim that Australians of the present generation should not claim credit for the bravery and self-sacrifice of their ancestors, over which they also had no control? Of course he does not. We all know that there is an organic connection between our forebears' virtues and our own. It is only their virtues which mysteriously fail to transmit.

This suggests a principle for dealing with the question of how far back an apology should travel, for there are quite clearly crimes of our ancestors for which we are not responsible and for which it would be pointless to apologise in any sense. Two examples from the remote fastnesses of north Essex illustrate this. In the museum in Saffron Walden are preserved a couple of inches of chamois-leather-coloured human skin, which were re-

moved from a Viking and nailed to the church door as a message to other raiders. I do not feel any urge to apologise for this to the Danes at the language school up the road. I don't even want them to apologise for King Canute. But none of the parties involved feel they are descended in any important sense from the warriors a thousand years ago; in fact we all probably descend from both sides and have inherited expertise in war crimes from both sides of the family.

There is another war memorial in the town, this time to the American airmen based in these parts who died bombing Germany in the Second World War. We are meant to be inspired by their bravery, and in some sense to have inherited it; and I like to believe that we may have done. But by the same token we are implicated in their killing of civilians, women and children. If we are to raise statues to the men of Bomber Command, perhaps we should also apologise to their innocent victims.

It is not just time which can make apologies ludicrous. There is no point in apologising if you have no power. The thing about liberal guilt is that the liberals who feel it are

hardly ever guilty of anything worse than sanctimoniousness. There is a certain sort of Christian who is constantly proposing to apologise for everything that has happened since St Paul had a ship wrecked under him, to the great distress of his fellow-passengers. But, as a general rule, Christians don't count when they apologise, because they have no power.

Mind you, Christians ought to have some rights over the apology, because they seem to have invented it. At least, they seem to have invented the sort of apology that is more than a straight tribute from the weaker to the stronger. The first public apologies seem to have been performed by penitent Christians in North Africa in the second century. As well as the confession of sins, this involved prolonged prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, until the bishop decided you had suffered enough. After that you were readmitted to the congregation, on condition of life-long celibacy. Christians soon began postponing any apology for their sins until their deathbeds, when life-long celibacy did not seem such a deprivation; and the church had to invent gentler forms of penance.

You can see the seed of the modern kind of apology in the

Middle Ages, when kings found themselves having to do penance for such hursts of exuberance as having archbishops murdered. Standing in the snow for three days, barefoot, while the Pope decided whether to see you, or shuffling round a stony cloister till your knees hid, were acknowledgements of both weakness and wrongdoing. No king would do such things unless he felt he had no alternative. But a king who did them was admitting that he had sinned, as well as that the Church had, for the moment, the upper hand.

The nearest modern equivalent to that sort of penance is the "I'm sorry the newspapers caught me", most recently displayed by Princess Diana after she took her sons to the cinema to watch (illegally) a film glorifying the exploits of the IRA, which has devoted so much time and effort to trying to murder her in-laws. But such transparently hypocritical displays can be made only to excuse individual wrong-doing. Whole nations cannot apologise on those terms.

Perhaps Mr Blair feels that the real tragedy of the potato famine is that the Irish kept going on about it, but he could not frame his apology on those terms. In fact, he used the third

And news just in from Hong Kong ...

Every time you switched on your radio or TV, it was there. Morning, noon and night. The latest state of play. The latest state of the experts pulled in to forecast the next round. The commentators gathered round to give their verdict. The ex-champions consulted for their view of today's tactics.

No, not Wimbledon. It's Hong Kong I'm talking about.

Every time I switched on my radio on the long drive north to Welshpool the other day, all I got was the droning of people who had been flown out to Hong Kong to tell us that in a few hours it would be handed over to the Chinese and that a few hours after that they would all be flying back again.

I think we all knew that. You would have had to be blind, deaf, dumb or sitting in the New Mexico desert celebrating the non-existence of UFOs not to be aware of the fact that we were giving Hong Kong back to the Chinese, and even then you would have had fairly good prior warning of the fact.

We have in fact known for more than 100 years that

Hong Kong was going to be given back to the Chinese in the middle of 1997. This was the best signposted, most heralded event of the 20th century, the one containing the least surprise value and the least news value.

And yet every time you switched on your radio and TV, as I seem to have said before, there it was. The grand closing-down, the great handover, the British bands and the Chinese fireworks. The last bit of the British Empire (apart from Bermuda, Anguilla, Gibraltar and all the other bits we still have) to be given back to the rightful owners. A moment to make you stop and think: "I wonder what's on the other side?"

So why had all the journalists flocked out to Hong Kong to tell us what we knew already?

Why did Fergal Keane wander down to the Hong Kong graveyard where so many British soldiers were buried and go into Fergal-Keane-legend mode?

Why did John Simpson put on his lightweight tropical gear and fly out to go into his well-what-happens-next mode?



Miles Kingston

Why were we given endless speculation on whether Geoffrey Howe would or would not attend the Chinese knees-up? Why was there endless coverage of Ted Heath getting off the plane in Hong Kong, when we all know that any event to which Ted Heath turns up is likely to turn out to be a non-event?

Was it because nothing else was happening in the world?

Was it in order to give a lot of journalists a jolly nice free trip to one of the best shopping areas in the world, not to mention John Birt,

who also turned up for the freebie?

A reader writes: Come off it, Mr Kingston, you're just jealous that you weren't invited! You're green with envy at the sight of all these reporters getting winded and dined and being given a last opportunity to buy cheap shirts and cameras! So now you're turning nasty and pretending it's all a lot of hokum!

Mr Kingston writes: No, sir – you're wrong. All in all, I'd rather be back in Britain, and I am not sorry to be up here in Welshpool, which in its own way is a bit like Hong Kong, being on the borders of two great nations, Wales and England, and which has one great advantage over Hong Kong, being completely free of the international press circus. I suppose I could have been out and about early today asking the inhabitants of Welshpool if they wanted to be given back to the Welsh, or indeed to the English, but exposure to the Hong Kong circus has cured me of that sort of journalism. By "that sort", I mean the kind of journalism today that is more inclined to speculation than to reporting. Speculation is

easy, reporting is hard. It is far easier to say what may happen after China takes over Hong Kong than to find out what is actually happening. The Tory party leadership struggle got more coverage before it happened than after, as do almost all events, from a British Lions match ("We go over now to the British Lions camp to find out how morale is before the big match") to the Northern Ireland peace process, which indeed is unique in being all speculation and no actuality. Or was the real reason that the Hong Kong handover was reported so widely simply that the media were handed all the pictures on a plate, and had only to fill in a few footnotes?

Meanwhile, here in Welshpool there is a big story which has gone unreported, and that is that one of the largest stores in town is called Major's, and that the week after the election it put up a notice saying "Closing Down Sale". I would have recommended putting a reporter on to it, except that they're all in Hong Kong.

Miles Kingston, Welshpool, *News at Ten*.

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Amersham merger creates world leader

Sameena Ahmad

Amersham International is merging with Nycomed of Norway to create the world's leading supplier of diagnostic imaging agents, which have a diverse range of medical uses from X-rays to scanners. The deal comes just three weeks after Amersham, the first company to be privatised by Margaret Thatcher in 1982, announced the merger of its life sciences division with that of Swiss drugs group, Pharmacia & Upjohn.

The new company, Nycomed Amersham, which at yesterday's share prices is valued at over £2bn, will have combined sales of £1.5bn and operating profits of £244m, of which £90m is accounted for by Amersham. The all-paper deal takes the form of an offer for Nycomed by higher rated Amersham - which will leave Amersham shareholders with 47 per cent of the combined group.

Though shares in both Amersham and Nycomed gained strongly in early trading, concerns that annual cost savings will be eroded by fierce competition in Nycomed's core US X-ray imaging market and uncertainty over renewal of two key contracts tempered Amersham's initial 25.5p hike. Amersham's shares closed 87.5p higher at £16.82p while Nycomed's shares climbed 23 per cent to 132.5 kronas.

Bill Castell, Amersham's chief executive who becomes chief executive of the new group, said Nycomed added potentially exciting areas of MRI and Ultrasound imaging to its own world-leading position in the radioactive sector.

"We now have the clout to offer radiological departments an entire range of products," he added. Trond Jacobsen, a director of Nycomed, estimated that the market for Ultrasound imaging agents could be worth £1bn by 2001. "There is a wonderful base of equipment which can use our agents. Most doctors already have ultrasound machines."

The new group will have 30 per cent of the £3bn world imaging market, leading Bracco (half-owned by Germany's Merck) with 21 per cent, the US's Mallinckrodt with 15 per cent and the Schering with 14 per cent.

Huntingdon shares dive on fewer orders

The share price of Huntingdon Life Sciences, the controversial group which tests drugs on animals, dived by 15 per cent to 55.5p after the company warned that disappointing new orders would leave profits for the year in December "substantially below" last year's £9.4m, writes Sameena Ahmad.

Christopher Cliffe, chief executive, said that recent allegations from animal rights groups which had led to criminal proceedings against several employees and a Home Office investigation into the group's working practices had proved seriously disruptive. "Considerable management effort has been devoted to keeping clients informed and to retaining clients' confidence," he said. Glaxo Wellcome and Zeneca

Mr Castell said that Nycomed's investments in Shanghai and Latin America positioned the enlarged company in new and fast growing markets. Merging administration, sales and marketing and the loss of around 300 jobs, including around 100 from the UK, from a combined workforce of 11,600 offered scope to save at least £40m a year to 2000, with half realised by December next year. Amersham, which is changing its year end from March to December, will make a £50m exceptional provision in its next nine month figures and is also paying a special dividend to Nycomed shareholders.

Analysts agreed that the deal made strategic sense and would be earnings enhancing, though numbers were complicated by the change in year end. £80m cost savings from restructuring at Nycomed following last year's profits warning and the inclusion of the Pharmacia business.

Nigel Barnes, pharmaceutical analyst at Merrill Lynch, said: "This makes an enormous amount of sense given both companies are in the imaging markets. There are synergies too though not great overlap since the new group will be in four different imaging markets." James Dodwell at BZW expects the merger to add around 85p to earnings and is looking for 105p earnings and pre-tax profits of £240m for the year to December 1998.

However, several analysts said privately that competition in Nycomed's mature X-ray imaging business - over 80 per cent of its £154m profits last year - could erode cost savings. Following its blocked merger with generic drug group Ivax last year, Nycomed lost share to rivals who were discounting prices by up to 60 per cent.

Though Mr Jacobsen said that the discounting is levelling off, the key test will be whether, on what terms, two of Nycomed's US contracts worth 15 per cent of Nycomed's sales are renewed.

There were also concerns that following the merger some 88 per cent of the group's profits will be earned overseas. The group, which is considering paying foreign income dividends, said that if sterling continued at current levels, pro-forma profits would be cut by £30m.



Anglo-Norwegian alliance: Amersham chief executive Bill Castell (right) with Trond Jacobsen, chief executive of Nycomed
Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Airtours chief to set up new base in US

Andrew Yates

David Crossland, chairman and founder of the UK's second-largest tour operator, Airtours, is moving to America to oversee the company's international expansion programme. The move is bound to fuel speculation that Mr Crossland is seeking to strengthen ties with Carnival, the US cruise company which owns a 30 per cent stake in Airtours and is widely expected to mount a full bid for the group.

Mr Crossland's decision to move from the UK marks an important change in Airtours' strategy, heralding a push to expand its international operations.

"Mr Crossland is going overseas to develop Airtours' business over there. He will travel extensively from his base in America. It shows that Airtours is not perceived as just a UK tour operator anymore. It is an international business," said an Airtours spokesman.

Mr Crossland will live in America for at least two years, but he may stay indefinitely. He will be based in California.

Among Mr Crossland's first tasks will be to reverse the decline in the company's North American business, which lost £1.2m in the six months to March compared to a profit of £2.9m the year before. Overcapacity has dogged its Canadian business, leading to depressed prices and mounting losses and adding to speculation that Airtours may be forced to exit that market.

Airtours also incurred start-up losses at its California tour business. But Mr Crossland is understood to be keen to rapidly expand the US business, building up its cruise business and entering the time share sector. Mr Crossland will also look for acquisitions. Last month Airtours paid \$20m (£12m) for California tour operator Suntrips. More US purchases look set to follow. Mr Crossland is also likely to target South America and the Far East.

Last month Lars Thuesen, former deputy chief executive of Airtours' Scandinavian business, became the new head of the group's UK tour and retail business which has paved the way for Mr Crossland's move to the US. Airtours has no plans to close its Lancashire headquarters and move lock, stock and barrel across the Atlantic.

Smith warns ITV's regional differences must stay

Cathy Newman

Chris Smith, Secretary of State for National Heritage, warned yesterday that the regional identity of the ITV companies must not be lost amid the rapid consolidation taking place in the industry.

He also dismissed as unlikely the recent predictions by Gerry Robinson, chairman of Granada Group, which is buying Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television, that all the ITV stations would merge within a decade.

Speaking at an Institute of

Economic Affairs Conference on the future of UK broadcasting, Mr Smith said four big owners - Carlton Communications, Granada, United News & Media and Scottish Media Group - would emerge. He added: "In the course of the next few months, we will see the establishment of three major blocks of ITV channels in England and Wales and one in Scotland."

He said he was "relaxed" about the rapid consolidation of ITV into the hands of four main players, but warned that

the regional character and programming of each ITV franchise must not be sacrificed in the rush to rationalise.

"It's extremely important that as the regions of ITV come together we do ensure that the regional character of the stations and the programme making is maintained. We do not want to see the regional definition disappearing as more and more gets concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer," he added.

His comments came at a time of frenetic takeover activity in the industry. Within the space

of a month, Scottish has bought Grampian Television; Granada has tabled an agreed bid for Yorkshire-Tyne Tees; and United has made a recommended offer for HTV Group.

The 15 ITV franchises were awarded to 14 separate holding companies in 1993. If, as seems likely, the two most recent offers go through, only three small independent companies will remain - Border Television, Ulster Television, and Channel Islands Television.

The Heritage Secretary also yesterday alluded to plans for

the creation of Ofcom, a regulatory body to cover the converging media and telecommunications industry. Mr Smith said laying new regulatory framework would take at least two years and would follow widespread consultation.

Referring to public disagreements between the Independent Television Commission and Ofcom on BSkyB's involvement in British Digital Broadcasting, he said he had "observed a slight nuance of difference" between the two watchdogs. He warned that

Ofcom and the ITC must co-operate on the regulation of digital television until a new framework could be established. "We will make sure the current regulators work properly together in accordance with their remits," he said.

He said his department was working in conjunction with the Department of Trade and Industry to consider how Ofcom should be developed. Mr Smith also indicated yesterday that Channel 4's remit should be redefined to ensure

the broadcaster's distinctive nature, its provision for minority interests and its "ability to be less mainstream".

Under the terms of the 1990 Broadcasting Act, Channel 4 is obliged to screen a suitable proportion of programming not generally catered for by Channel 3. This definition is likely to be honed in a new broadcasting bill.

However, Mr Smith has already indicated that there will be no new media legislation in this session of Parliament, which runs until October 1998.

NatWest shares hit record high on rumours of strike

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Shares in National Westminster Bank soared to a record high yesterday as renewed takeover speculation surrounded the group. NatWest shares closed 42.5p higher at 849.5p with some City dealers talking of an "imminent strike".

Barclays, Commerzbank of Germany and the Royal Bank of Scotland were all mentioned as possible bidders though most analysts dismissed takeover talk as little more than rumour.

"No one is selling, so any rumour is making the stock fly," said one analyst.

NatWest declined to comment on the speculation, as did Barclays and Commerzbank. One analyst said Commerzbank was too small to make a tilt at NatWest as it was only half its size. Royal Bank of Scotland would be in an even weaker po-

sition as it is around a third the size of NatWest.

Some analysts said Prudential could be interested in NatWest as it remained keen to expand in banking while NatWest was interested in expanding in life assurance. However, any of the big four UK clearing banks would face regulatory problems as a takeover would give a merged clearer such a big share in retail banking. NatWest would be valued as a "going concern", meaning a bidder would have to take a goodwill write-off of up to £7bn. Analysts said this would be too much even for a giant like HSBC.

Shares in other banks such as Lloyds TSB, Bank of Scotland and Royal Bank of Scotland all rose strongly yesterday.

Analysts were also dismissive about a possible link-up between NatWest Markets and BZW, the investment banking arms of NatWest and Barclays

respectively. They said management would struggle to integrate the two without damaging profitability and losing key staff. "It would take unbelievable management skills to pull it off," one analyst said.

The share surge follows a decision on Monday by the Takeover Panel to turn down a request by NatWest to force Barclays to make a statement about any bid plans. Alistair Defries, the panel's director-general, said he saw no reason to intervene.

NatWest approached Abbey National about a possible link-up earlier this year and there has been speculation since about a link with another financial institution. NatWest was plunged into a financial crisis last month when it issued a profits warning and the head of its investment banking arm resigned. This followed the discovery of a mispricing of interest rate options which cost the bank £77m.

EMI secures copyright to Motown classics for £132m

Cathy Newman

EMI Group, one of the world's largest music publishers, has secured the copyright to 15,000 classic Motown hits such as *My Girl* and *I Heard It Through the Grapevine* in a £132m (£80m) deal.

The company has taken a 50 per cent stake in the Jobete companies - Jobete Music Co and Stone Mountain Music Corporation - owned by the founder of Motown Records, Berry Gordy. Sir Colin Southgate, EMI's chairman, said yesterday it was likely EMI would buy the remainder of the Jobete companies in the future.

He added that EMI had, through protracted negotiations, gained control of "the greatest private catalogue". Sir Colin said EMI had "been to the altar three times with Berry, but this is the first time we've got married".

The Jobete catalogue includes Motown classics sung by artists such as Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, the Jackson Five, Lionel Richie and Smokey Robinson. Through the deal, which was funded entirely in cash, EMI has bought the copyright to songs such as *Baby Love*, *Just My Imagination*, *High Enough* and *Reach Out I'll Be There*.

Sir Colin said he was confident EMI's full ownership of Mr Gordy's catalogue would not be "decades away". It is thought EMI would take control of the Jobete companies on Mr Gordy's retirement, if not before. Mr Gordy, who will remain chairman of the business, is 67.

Day-to-day operation of the catalogue will be handled by Martin Bandier, chief executive of EMI Music Publishing. EMI already had a marketing agreement with Mr Gordy outside North America, which will be extended throughout the

world as a result of yesterday's acquisition.

City analysts were impressed with the deal. One said the price paid was "not unreasonable" and added: "Consolidation in music publishing is a good idea. Music publishing is a very profitable business." Another said EMI would "do very well" by including the songs in compilations. EMI Music Publishing already owns the copyright to more than 1 million songs, including those by Lamirouqui, M People, and the Prodigy.

Unaudited accounts show that, at 31 December 1995, the Jobete companies had net assets of \$45.2m and reported pre-tax profits of \$6.7m. The two companies are owned by Mr Gordy and his sister Esther Edwards and was the largest remaining independently owned catalogue. Jobete Music was founded in 1959 and became the music publishing arm of Motown Records.

Super-SIB will face problems, warns Imro

Nic Cicutti

Personal Finance Editor

Phillip Thorpe, chief executive of Imro, the fund managers' watchdog, warned yesterday that Labour proposals for a powerful single regulatory body, dubbed "super-SIB" by the City, risked creating a "massive bureaucracy".

Mr Thorpe said the enlarged Securities and Investments Board (SIB), headed by Howard Davies, which would swallow up his own organisation, offered the prospect of a simpler, more integrated form of regulation.

"There are some gains to be made from such a move, the elimination of gaps and overlaps, the levelling of uneven playing fields, the more efficient use of resources and so on," Mr Thorpe said. "There are also some predictable concerns to be recognised: particularly that this could create a massive regulatory bureaucracy, unable to respond to the rapid change of the markets, or given to seeking common solutions where previously bespoke arrangements best accommodated investor and business needs."

Imro is part of a project team set up by the SIB and which includes the Bank of England working on plans that will be submitted to Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, by the end of July. Mr Brown announced plans to pass supervision of the banking community from the Bank of England to the SIB within days of Labour winning the General Election.

The second phase will see other self-regulatory organisa-

tions, such as Imro, the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA) and the Personal Investment Authority (PIA), folded into the SIB within the next three years.

Mr Thorpe stressed that he believed Mr Brown would be "on guard" to avoid the potential pitfalls in his proposals. He said: "The regulator must be, and must be seen as, independent in its operation and must have the knowledge, involvement and support of the industry it seeks to regulate. It must also be open and accountable if it is to secure the confidence of investors and those who it regulates."

The Imro chief executive's comments were made as the regulator published the annual report on its activities. The regulator said it had 44 investigations in hand at the end of March 1997 while 43 disciplinary actions had been taken during the year, up 26 per cent from last year.

In the 12 months to April 1997, Imro levied more than £3.5m in fines and investigation costs from its members, up from £335,000 in the previous year. That total did not include the £2m, plus £1m in costs, levied in April on Morgan Grenfell, the fund management group owned by Deutsche Bank, over the irregular trading activities of its rogue fund manager, Peter Young.

Imro said yesterday it had been successful in ensuring that nearly all pensions mis-selling cases in which its members were involved had been reviewed.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100		Dow Jones		Nikkei		Euro Stoxx		Hang Seng	
4780	4780	7900	7900	17800	17800	3400	3400	10000	10000
4780	4780	7900	7900	17800	17800	3400	3400	10000	10000
4780	4780	7900	7900	17800	17800	3400	3400	10000	10000
4780	4780	7900	7900	17800	17800	3400	3400	10000	10000
4780	4780	7900	7900	17800	17800	3400	3400	10000	10000
4780	4780	7900	7900	17800	17800	3400	3400	10000	10000
4780	4780	7900	7900	17800	17800	3400	3400	10000	10000
4780	4780	7900	7900	17800	17800	3400	3400	10000	10000
4780	4780	7900	7900	17800	17800	3400	3400	10000	10000

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling		UK medium gov		US long bond		Money Market Rates		Bond Yields	
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term
5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term	Long Term

CURRENCIES											
£/\$				£/DM				£/¥			
<small>Only New Zealand currency and US Dollar have 12-Month history</small>											
Pound						Dollar					
Yesterday		Change		Year Ago		Yesterday		Change		Year Ago	
£/D (London)		1.5582		-0.01c		1.9538		£/London		0.6031 +0.15 0.6438	
£/N (York)		1.5580		-0.05c		1.5405		£/N (York)		0.5033 +0.23 0.6491	
£/L (London)		2.1854		-1.47c		2.3651		DM (London)		1.7401 +0.20 1.5222	
£/DM (London)		180.248		-10.21		170.423		¥ (London)		114.780 +2.55 109.885	
S. Index		101.7		-0.5		86.3		S. Index		162.7 +0.1 87.2	
OTHER INDICATORS											
Yesterday		Day's Chg		Year Ago		Index		Latest Yr Ago		Next Figs	
DM Euro \$		18.84		+0.63		19.91		RPI		150.9 +0.36 150.9 8 Jul	
Gold \$		334.05		+0.1		332.00		CPI		109.7 +2.66 107.0 25 Jul	
GDP %		201.82		-0.2		246.00		Base Rate		8.50	

OTHER INDICATORS									
Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday	
Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday	
Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday	
Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday	
Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday	
Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday	
Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday	
Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday	
Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday		Yesterday	

150 من الراجل

business

C&W doubles its stake in Optus

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Cable & Wireless unveiled a further expansion of its interests in the fast-growing Asia Pacific region yesterday, with a £445m deal to double its stake in Australia's second-largest phone and cable TV group.

The agreement, revealed in *The Independent* last week, involves C&W buying the 24.5 per cent shareholding in the company, Optus Communications, for A\$980m (£445m) from its long-standing investor, Bell South of the US. C&W already owns another 24.5 per cent of Optus, taking its total shareholding in the Sydney-based group to 49 per cent.

The deal is the latest in a string of agreements secured since Dick Brown, C&W's chief executive, joined the company a

year ago. The news helped push its shares 18p higher in yesterday's buoyant trading to 570.5p.

C&W recently took over management control by appointing Peter Howell-Davies, former head of Mercury, as chief executive. Two other senior UK managers moved across to Australia at the same time.

C&W has also gained an option to increase its stake in Optus up to 51.5 per cent and Robert Lerwell, finance director, hinted it could increase its holding. "We don't think it's essential, but we'd have to look at the time. We may do it if it was good value and assuming the Australian government was happy for us to go higher."

Another 25 per cent Optus shareholder, Mayne Nickless, has also indicated it wanted to reduce its stake. Optus had been expected to float itself later

this year, enabling Mayne Nickless to find an exit route, but Mr Lerwell suggested this could be delayed. "It could be one year, two years or three years. We don't know."

Created in 1992, Optus has 18 per cent of the country's long distance phone market, with 1.9 million customers and 32 per cent of the mobile market. Its cable network also offers pay television services to 180,000 homes. Optus made its first full-year profit last year of A\$60m.

Mr Lerwell said C&W would fund the acquisition partly with the proceeds of the sale of a 5.5 per cent stake in Hongkong Telecom, which raised £770m at the current exchange rate. The Australian deal, coupled with C&W's £652m (£407.5m) purchase of Panama's telephone operator, meant C&W's gearing would rise to almost 70 per cent.

Two ELC directors leave after review

Nigel Cope

John Menzies, the retail group, has announced a raft of management changes at its Early Learning Centre subsidiary, which was responsible for a profits warning from the group in January.

ELC's chief executive, Ian Duncan, and managing director, Andrew Crankshaw, are leaving. While they will be eligible for compensation for loss of office, the company said the pay-offs would not be excessive as the two directors were not on the main board and were on one-year contracts.

Dermot Jenkinson, chairman of ELC and a John Menzies main board director, will take over the business until successors can be appointed.

John Menzies managing director David Mackay, who took over in January, has completed his review of the 200-strong chain and resolved not to sell it. It is understood that companies such as Kingfisher, which owns Woolworths, looked at the company.

John Menzies said yesterday that "trading at ELC continues to be impacted by competition and changes to shopping habits".

Company Results

	Turnover (£m)	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Ashtech Int'l (F)	2.17m (1.75m)	-1.13m (382,180)	-4.1p (2.7p)	
Birkby (F)	51.7m (57.8m)	10.1m (8.4m)	13.4p (13.8p)	8.5p
Crest Nicholson (F)	192.8m (182.4m)	7.2m (2.2m)	3.8p (0.45p)	1.25p (0.60p)
Dunlop (F)	21.5m (19.5m)	2.8m (1.3m)	12.2p (7.2p)	4.75p (3.50p)
East Thomson (F)	5.8m (5.9m)	2.6m (1.3m)	4.4p (2.9p)	1.25p
William Group (F)	32.3m (28.9m)	1.9m (2.4m)	11.4p (15.5p)	7.0p (7.0p)
London & Edinburgh (F)	1.0m (95.4m)	56.5m (51.7m)	0.23p (0.29p)	nil
Lombard Holdings (F)	1.6m (89.0m)	-690,000 (1,437,000)	-1.0p (2.2p)	
MFI (F)	873.2m (791.7m)	70.3m (58.1m)	8.24p (6.97p)	4.8p (4.4p)

(F) = Final (I) = Interim (N) = Nine months

Luard sells Flextech shares

Roger Luard, chief executive of Flextech, the cable and satellite television programmer, yesterday sold £4.3m worth of shares in the company to its main investor, writes Cathy Newman.

Mr Luard sold 698,435 shares to Tele-Communications International (TCI), Flextech's controlling shareholder, at 622.5p each. At the same time, Mark Luiz, group financial director, sold 50,000 shares to TCI.

Mr Luard signalled his intention to sell shares and options in the company in March, after tying up two joint ventures with the BBC to supply channels to pay-television.

The shares dropped from 770p to around 620p after the BBC announcement, and it is thought Mr Luard had been holding on for a higher price before selling. However, the 622.5p a share he eventually secured is some way off Flextech's year-high price of 802.5p.

Kitchen sales should boost MFI

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY NIGEL COPE

There are few stock market sectors as highly volatile as retailing at the moment where the slightest slip is punished mercilessly. Just ask shareholders in MFI. Shares in the furniture group soared from 115p at the beginning of 1995 to 209p last autumn on strong sales increases and the recovering housing market.

But news of a sales slowdown in March hammered the stock, which halved to just over 100p.

With its volatile past, the market has always been slightly jumpy about MFI so it is no surprise that the retail watchers are divided on the prospects for the group, which yesterday reported a 21 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £70.3m for the year to 26 April.

On the positive side, like-for-like sales have started to move ahead since the May election and in the first nine weeks of the year are 5 per cent up on the same period last year.

That compares with a strong increase of 15 per cent the previous year and so is a creditable achievement.

Perhaps the most encouraging news is the level of enquiries for kitchens which are thought to be ahead by a double-digit figure on last year.

MFI typically converts 60 per cent of these enquiries into sales and it is the more expensive kitchens such as Schreiber that are generating the most interest.

Then there are the HomeWorks conversions where half the stores have been updated to the new format which offers wider ranges and an airier feel. These conversions still deliver a strong sales increase.

But there are still uncertainties over MFI's market. One issue is the degree to which it will benefit from the windfall factor which John Collier, chief executive, says has not yet filtered through to its kitchen and bathroom sales.

Another is the housing market which MFI says is not booming outside London and could be hit by today's Budget measures on mortgage interest tax relief and stamp duty.

It is also unclear how MFI is faring on market share. It admits that it is reviewing its position in upholstery, which accounts for 3 per cent of group sales and does not make any money. And with strong sales from the likes of B&Q and the John Lewis Partnership these gains must be coming from somewhere.

Another concern is rising costs with higher interest charges as well as rising rent and rate costs. Capital expenditure jumped from £60m to £73m last year and will rise to £80m in the current year.

The wide spread of brokers' forecasts for MFI shows how hard the company

is to judge. But on UBS's figure of £77.5m, the shares, down 6p to 129p yesterday, trade on a forward rating of 12. This is a 10 per cent discount to the sector and after recent weakness the shares rank as a hold.

Crest cashes in on housing boom

Crest Nicholson, the Surrey-based building and construction group, has been nothing if not accident-prone. The business had a torrid recession after over-extending its land bank in the 1980s and then came a crop in 1995 as a result of mismanaged expansion in the Midlands and the East. That led to a major clear-out of middle managers, but with a low base to build from and with half its business still in the currently accelerating south-east property market, Crest should have a fair wind behind it this year.

The interim figures to April certainly bear out that analysis. Pre-tax profits more than tripled, rising from £2.21m to £7.21m, on turnover 15 per cent ahead at £153m.

The figures were driven by residential housing, which saw margins soar from 3.8 per cent to 11.5 per cent. The improvement is all the more impressive given that there was no help from residential land sales this time, which raised £5.7m in the first half of 1996.

Clearly, management has made strenuous efforts to rein in costs which had been running out of control. Even so, Crest has cashed in on the gathering south-east housing boom. Overall reservations jumped by more than 30 per cent in the period, leading to a 10 per cent rise in numbers of houses sold.

Meanwhile, higher prices helped boost the average selling price by 8.6 per cent to £104,000.

Naturally, what happens with mortgage interest relief and stamp duty in today's Budget is causing the company some concern, at least in the short term.

The omens on that front are encouraging, given the continuing strength of the market and the fact that the expected dip caused by the May general election failed to materialise.

But with its history, the market will want evidence from Crest that it has

truly turned the corner and there were some jitters yesterday that the formation of a new western division is the precursor to further geographic expansion.

So even with SBC Warburg humping up its full-year profit forecast by a third in £20m yesterday, the shares, up 1.5p to 104p, on a lowly forward multiple of 9, are only attractive for the stout-hearted.

Metroline set for a comfortable ride

Metroline, the London bus operator which is driving to the stock market later this month with a value of around £35m, looks an attractive prospect. Metroline's management bought the business from London Transport in 1994, one of 10 such businesses privatised over the past few years. Since then turnover has risen from £16m to £37m and profits have more than tripled to £3m.

Most of its income is fixed and regulated by London Transport, which has awarded it five-year franchises to run services throughout north-west London. But by improving efficiency and cutting back on overheads Metroline has been able to significantly improve margins. It has already done most of the hard work and margins are unlikely to rise much further. That said, Metroline is winning plenty of new work from competitors as new routes come up for grabs and the London bus market should continue to grow steadily if the Labour government is serious about endorsing public transport. It is also growing the top line by diversifying into new areas such as providing buses on tourist excursions and supermarket shopping trips.

Acquisitions should follow quickly after the flotation. It is raising up to £5m to pay off debts and give it the financial fire power to make purchases. Targets include the host of small bus companies in and around London.

Metroline forecasts profits of at least £4m for the year to this October. Analysts reckon the shares will be priced on a prospective price-earnings ratio of between 10 and 11. That puts the stock on at least a 20 per cent discount to rivals such as FirstBus or Stagecoach.

Bid speculation is also likely to add spice to the share price. Metroline is believed to have had informal takeover talks with FirstBus. It has decided to go it alone but there are plenty of predators ready to pounce if its managers steer the wrong path. Investors should climb aboard.

MFI: At a glance

Market value: £761.4m, share price 129p

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Five-year record					
Turnover (£m)	609.9	659.4	720.7	798.2	853.1
Pre-tax profits (£m)	15.5	67.8	66.1	58.1	70.3
Earnings per share (p)	2.3	10.0	7.9	7.1	8.2
Dividends per share (p)	3.75	4.0	4.25	4.4	4.8

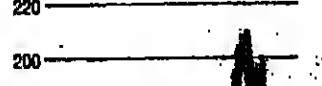
Capital Expenditure (£)

1996 1997



Share price (pence)

1994 1995 1996 1997



Agnew leads Taylor by a length for the top job at Lloyd's

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

So who will replace Sir David Rowland as chairman of Lloyd's of London? A puff of white smoke is expected from the Lloyd's Council meeting in Lime Street today and Jonathan Agnew, former head man at Kleinwort Benson, is widely tipped for the job. Which is not to say that Max Taylor, chief operations officer of Willis Corroon, is completely out of the running.

Sir David Rowland was appointed on 1 January 1993. The chairman of the insurance market usually serves for three years. A firm of headhunters was commissioned this year and ended up with

a shortlist of three - Mr Agnew, Mr Taylor and Adam Broadbent, a former director of Schroders.

The shortlist has been handed to a panel set up by Lloyd's to select a new chairman, headed by Sir Jeremy Morse. This panel reports to Lloyd's main council today.

Apparently Mr Broadbent has dropped off the list and Mr Agnew is leading Mr Taylor by a length. Interesting that two of the candidates should be former corporate finance men. Mr Broadbent did much to build Schroders' department before he retired from the merchant bank two years ago.

He also played a huge role in making the Schroders' connection with Wertheim in New York work, and is looked upon in the City as "well-respected, active and energetic". He is a director of Cardo Engineering of Sheffield, a specialist maker of wire and cabling.

Mr Agnew is also a former corporate financier who reached the top at Kleinwort before it was swallowed by Dresdner Bank. An old boy of Eton, the Sorbonne and

Trinity, Cambridge, Mr Agnew worked on *The Economist*, in Hill Samuel and in Morgan Stanley, as well as Kleinwort and his own financial consultancy, JGW Agnew.

Now Mr Agnew is chairman of Limit, the largest corporate investor in Lloyd's, which recently acquired two of Lloyd's largest managing agencies, Bankside and Janson Green. Which helps explain why he is the favourite for the Lloyd's chairmanship.

Skip this paragraph if you're squeamish. The national symbol of South Africa is the springbok, a deer-like animal. Tourist shops in South Africa sell springbok skins. Following last Saturday's Test series victory by the British Lions over the Springbok rugby team, visiting British fans have taken to buying springbok skins and wearing them as a symbol of triumph, I am told. Gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "skinned alive".

Barclays Bank's investment banking arm, BZW, has promoted Graeme White from managing di-

rector, BZW Private Equity UK, to head of BZW Private Equity following the retirement of Errol Bishop.

Mr Bishop had his retirement hash on Monday, having been with the firm since 1981.

Mr White, 44, will take over responsibility for the operation world-wide, including France, Germany, Italy, Hong Kong and the US. BZW's specialist infrastructure team, which will establish an equity fund for investing in UK projects, will also report to him.

John Willcock



Favourite: Jonathan Agnew is chairman of Limit

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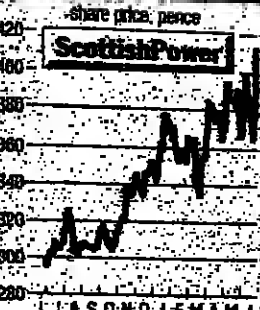
صكرا من الامم

market report / shares

A crazy day as Footsie scores second-biggest gain

Data Bank	
FTSE 100	4728.3 +123.7
FTSE 250	4452.5 +21.2
FTSE 350	2278.3 +50.3
SEAQ VOLUME	792.1m shares
53,716 bargains	
Gifts Index	96.99 +0.48

Share spotlight



It was, by general consent, the craziest day the stock market has experienced for years. For no obvious reason Footsie took off, scoring its second biggest gain in its 13 years existence.

It all started with swirling stories that a bid for National Westminster Bank was about to materialise. Then the futures market soared, propelling the cash market higher.

Suddenly there were whispers the boys in dark glasses in the futures pit had got a whiff of at least some of the contents of Gordon Brown's Budget.

And, ran the yarn, the market had little to fear, with much of the pain due to be inflicted on the consumer.

Hopes that US interest rates would remain unchanged and a firm Government stocks market were other favourable influences.

With many market makers having decided to remain short

of stock ahead of the Budget the sudden futures-led activity caught them on the hop. Their scramble for cover sent Footsie rocketing, with £24.4bn added to company values. The index gained a staggering 123.7 points to 4,728.3; it was the biggest jump since the turmoil of the 1987 crash although in percentage terms it lagged behind the ERM upsurge in 1992.

The index is now 54.8 below its closing peak, hit last month. Turnover was modest, underlining the technical nature of the upsurge. And the supporting indices were left limping, with the FTSE 250 index gaining a meagre 21.2 points and the FTSE SmallCap managed to record a miserable 0.4 gain.

Many market men were bemused by the Footsie charge. "It's bloody crazy," the market has lost touch with reality," said one.



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

The NatWest story at one time had the bank leading the Finstie leader board. The shares were up 47p; they closed 42p higher at 849.5p in relatively busy trading. Commerzbank, the German group, was put forward as the new favourite to strike, although its bid candidature was dismissed by most observers.

The NatWest display inspired other financials and with money shares now such a powerful Footsie influence the index was already on a roll when the futures activity exploded. At the end of trading the September futures were showing a hefty premium to the cash index.

Lloyds TSB was top of the blue-chip pile with a 39.5p gain to 655.5p. Bank of Scotland, up 22p to 406p, and HSBC, 86p in 1,934.5p, were among the others in the money.

Utilities were strong on the unexpectedly benign approach of Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, and stories that Mr Brown's wind-fall tax would not be too onerous. ScottishPower glowed 22p to 413p and Thames Water flowed 34.5p to 738p.

BSkyB led the motley collection of out-of-favour blue chips with an 11p fall to 429p. LucasVarity, undertaking a 1.5 million share buyback at 205p, was another to miss the fun, off

3.5p to 204.5p. Hillsdown Holdings, the food and furniture group, fell 5p to 164p. It is meeting analysts and ABN Amro Hoare Govett quickly cut its profits forecast by £10m to £160m.

Perkins Foods held at 82.5p after Henderson Croshaw said buy. Iceland, the frozen food chain, hardened 5.5p to 87p. NatWest Securities lifted this year's profit forecast by £10m to £160m.

British Petroleum Petroleum rose 7.5p to 1,445p, with HSBC said to be making positive noises.

Amersham International's Norwegian merger prompted an 87.5p gain to 1,682.5p. It encouraged thoughts of more industry deals, with Biocompatibles International moving 46p ahead to 1,347.5p.

Results left MFI Furniture off 1p at 129p; KOC International, an optics electronic

company, suffered the day's biggest fall, nearly halving to 67.5p after warning of a possible loss this year. In March the shares were 178.5p.

English National Investment Co, off 5p to 259p, confirmed it had taken a 29.9 per cent interest in Italian football club Vicenza. Bahamas-based multi-millionaire Joseph Lewis, who has 25 per cent of Glasgow Rangers, controls ENIC.

Thomas Potts returned from suspension after its failure to take over Coalite, 4.5p lower at 7.5p and Consolidated Coal was cut 5p to 7.5p following disclosures of more mining problems and plans to make a £1.8m rights issue.

Recent firms were 0.5p lower at 284.5p. The shares rallied 2p after the company said it knew of no reason for the recent share weakness. Earlier this month they were above 300p.

EFT jumped 38p in 172.5p on the Bank of Scotland bid.

Taking Stock

Shares of Acorn, the computer group, are weak, falling 14p to 173.5p yesterday in active trading. There are suggestions Olivetti, the Italian group, is planning to sell more shares through the Lehman Brothers investment house. The Italians, who have been selling assets to cut debts, once controlled Acorn. They have gradually reduced their involvement and earlier this year Lehman sold shares to 20 institutions at around 190p. In its last year Acorn cut losses from £12.6m to £6.3m. Its shares topped 300p last year.

Bridport-Gundry, once famed for its fishing nets, is considering to sell its traditional operations to concentrate on aviation products. It is selling a twin maker and a fishing net operation for around £1.7m. The shares rose 17p to 116.5p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price-earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, including exceptional items.

Three digit: 1 for region 1 Ex-dividend 2 Ex at a Unlisted Securities Market 3 Suspended 4 Fully Paid 5 Paid 6 Dividend 7 Dividend 8 Dividend 9 Dividend

Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

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Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock Vol/1000 Stock Vol/1000 Stock Vol/1000 Stock Vol/1000 Stock Vol/1000

FT 2000000 Centrica 930000 AFI 930000 Standard Chartered 720000

Amersham 1800000 NatWest 930000 BHP 720000 QinetiQ 670000

ASDA 1600000 BT 1000000 Lloyds 750000 Genetec 650000

Shell 1400000 BP 1000000 BP 720000 Lloyds 650000

BT 1400000 BT 1000000 BP 720000 Lloyds 650000

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Hungry riders craving for success

Pulling your weight can inflict a harsh penalty, reports
Greg Wood

A jockey's life almost killed Walter Swinburn at Sha Tin 18 months ago, but it was not enough to finish his career in the saddle. Now, though, it seems that a far more mundane problem will ensure that one of the most talented and popular jockeys of recent years has ridden his last winner.

It was in late April that Swinburn announced he was taking a "sabbatical" from race-riding to confront persistent problems with his weight, a reminder that the eternal conflict between jockeys and the scales does not spare the successful. And while he, with three Derbys, an Arc and two dozen other Group One winners to his name, has already accumulated enough memories and money to keep him comfortable in retirement, for many others, the struggle goes on.

It is at its most bitter for the journeymen, who rely on riding fees for their living, rather than a share of the purses from a handful of winners. For them, the relationship between pounds of body weight and pounds in the bank can be painfully direct. They are men like Richard Perham, whose natural weight is about nine stone but who can ride at 8st 4lb, which means, as he points out, that "I'll be about 8st 2lb stripped".

Weight is never far from Perham's thoughts. "The first thing I think about when I wake up in the morning is what sort of weight I'm going to be, and what I'll be the following day," he says. "If I have a light ride coming up, I'm constantly thinking about it. It's not an easy life. I try to have a bowl of bran flakes in the morning to keep the system going, and I might have some fruit on the way to the races and pick at a bit of meat at lunchtime. Then in the evening there'll be something sensible, like a bit of chicken or fish with salad."

Such austerity is almost unique among professional athletes, but Perham believes his regime is typical of all but a fortunate handful of his colleagues. "Generally every jockey tries to do lighter than they really should because everybody feels that if they can take off another pound or two, it might lead to an extra winner, a better income. Everybody craves success and wants to win."

Ultimately, the effects of this constant vigilance and denial are



Burden of proof: Seb Sanders is checked on the scales before going to mount up at Brighton racecourse

Photograph: Robert Hallam

not simply physical, but mental and emotional too. "If you are going without, it makes you angry, you bite at things you probably shouldn't do," Perham says. "It doesn't help your moods at all. People say that jockeys have a hard life, but I think that their wives have a harder time."

Michael Canfield, secretary of the Jockeys' Association, admits that "it's a huge mental thing, it really affects their domestic life. The things which break me most in my job are the injuries, and the sight of jockeys wasting day in, day out, I never approach a jockey who's wasting, and when you see them come out of the same boiling their heads off, you think, that's no sort of life."

The sauna has been a familiar part of almost every jockey's

life for many years, but it is at best a short-term answer to weight problems. "All you're doing is dehydrating yourself," Perham says, "and the first thing that happens when you drink anything, whether it's water or tea, is that it goes straight

This will be welcome news to Dr Michael Turner, the Jockey Club's chief medical advisor, who is keen to stamp out some of the traditional, but often downright unhealthy, practices of the (note the name) weighing room. "We've always been

to the amount of exercise you take. The physical exercise jockeys get on horseback each day is actually very small, maybe 30 or 40 minutes a day. They need to run, cycle and swim to enable them to cut enough food."

Turner believes that such desperate remedies as diuretics (the "pee pills" beloved of generations of jockeys) or a finger down the throat are now on the wane. "All the older jockeys have tried diuretics or laxatives, and they tend to try it once and give it up," he says. "These drugs are not, at present, on the Club's list of banned substances, but every time we do a urine test we test for diuretics, and we don't find many, whereas the French have huge numbers, and have just added them to their banned list. In America they have problems with ba-

linia, but there's much evidence of it happening here."

Perham agrees, but only to a point. "A lot of people have lapsed with that idea and find it pretty unpleasant," he says. "But there are a couple who do it on a daily basis, and there's one jockey who has to go to Harley Street once or twice a year to have his stomach reduced. That can't be a whole lot of fun, but these are the extremes that people will go to."

One way or another, jockeys will keep pushing their weight as low as it can go, and then a little further. Punters considering Swinburn's disappearance from the weighing room when he should be in his prime may conclude that the Chorbey is mad, but there is an alternative explanation. Maybe it was sanity that prevailed.

Pilsudski backed to Eclipse Bosra

Pilsudski was yesterday well backed for Saturday's Coral-Eclipse Stakes at Sandown. The sponsors cut the price of last year's Breeders' Cup Turf winner, who was runner up to Predappio in the Hardwicke Stakes at Royal Ascot last time out, to 3-1 from 4-1.

"There has been a significant gamble and we have laid Pilsudski in to lose around £50,000," Coral spokesman Simon Clare said. "There was nothing all morning then suddenly they all came in at 1.45."

Bosra Sham, the 1996 1,000

Guineas and Champion Stakes winner who beat Alhaarth by eight lengths in the Prince of Wales's Stakes at the Royal meeting last month, remains the

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: May King Mayhem (Folkstone 4.30)
NB: Bina Gardens (Yarmouth 8.35)

4-6 favourite, having delighted in a gallop yesterday. "She worked beautifully this morning and she is on course for

the race," trainer Henry Cecil reported.

Godolphin put the final piece in the Eclipse jigsaw yesterday morning by announcing Allied Forces a definite runner.

Sheikh Mohammed's organisation will bid to lift the Group One prize for the third year running with Royal Ascot's Queen Anne Stakes winner, whose participation was described as no more than "likely" after the five-day declarations.

Godolphin's racing manager, Simon Crisford said: "I had to talk to the owners, and it was a

simple question of whether to run—and he will definitely run."

Allied Forces, 14-1, with Coral, is outsider of the quintet with the sponsors to emulate 1995 and 1996 winner Halling.

He will be ridden by Frankie Dettori, leaving the way clear for Willie Ryan to renew his partnership with Benny The Dip. The Derby winner's odds were pushed out from 9-2 to 5-1 by Coral who also eased Sasuru's price to 10-1 from 8-1.

Coral betting: 4-6 Bosra Sham, 3-1 Pilsudski (4-1), 5-1 Bina Gardens (4-1), 10-1 Allied Forces (10-1), 14-1 Allied Forces

Redcar abandoned due to waterlogging

Today's meeting at Redcar has been abandoned after recent heavy rain made the course unrunnable.

John Gundill, the clerk of the course, was scheduled to hold an inspection for 5pm yesterday to determine whether the card could go ahead.

But, before the inspection was due to take place, he reported: "The course is unfit to race due to persistent rain which has caused waterlogging."

Rain-hit Yarmouth was yesterday confident that this week's two-day meeting will beat the weather.

"The going is soft but there should be no problem at all," said groundsmen Graham Waitt. "We had 15.8mm of rain yesterday and 34.2mm on Friday but even if there is more rain there will be no problem."

The forecast is for showers this afternoon and evening but the ground will take that.

Results, page 28

YARMOUTH

6.35 Ice Age 7.05 Fly High 7.35 VENI VIDI VICI (nap) 8.05 Altib 8.35 Purist 9.05 Contrarie

GOING: Soft.
STALLS: Strong. - Fairly steady - inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5 to 1m.
Left-hand course: Low for 5 to 1m.
Course: In W of (own off) 25. Wagoner station 1m. ADMIS-
SION: Club 5.15; Terrace 5.50; Family and course enclosure
5.50. CAR PARK: 5.50.

BLENDED FIRST TIMES: Unusually (over 7.35).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Somewhat (10.35) sent 279 miles by M Saunders from Hagley, Somerset.

6.35 APPRENTICE LIMITED STAKES (CLASS G) £3,000 added 3y 4yds

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6.35 ROMNEY MARSH MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £4,850 added 2y 0 fms of 189yds

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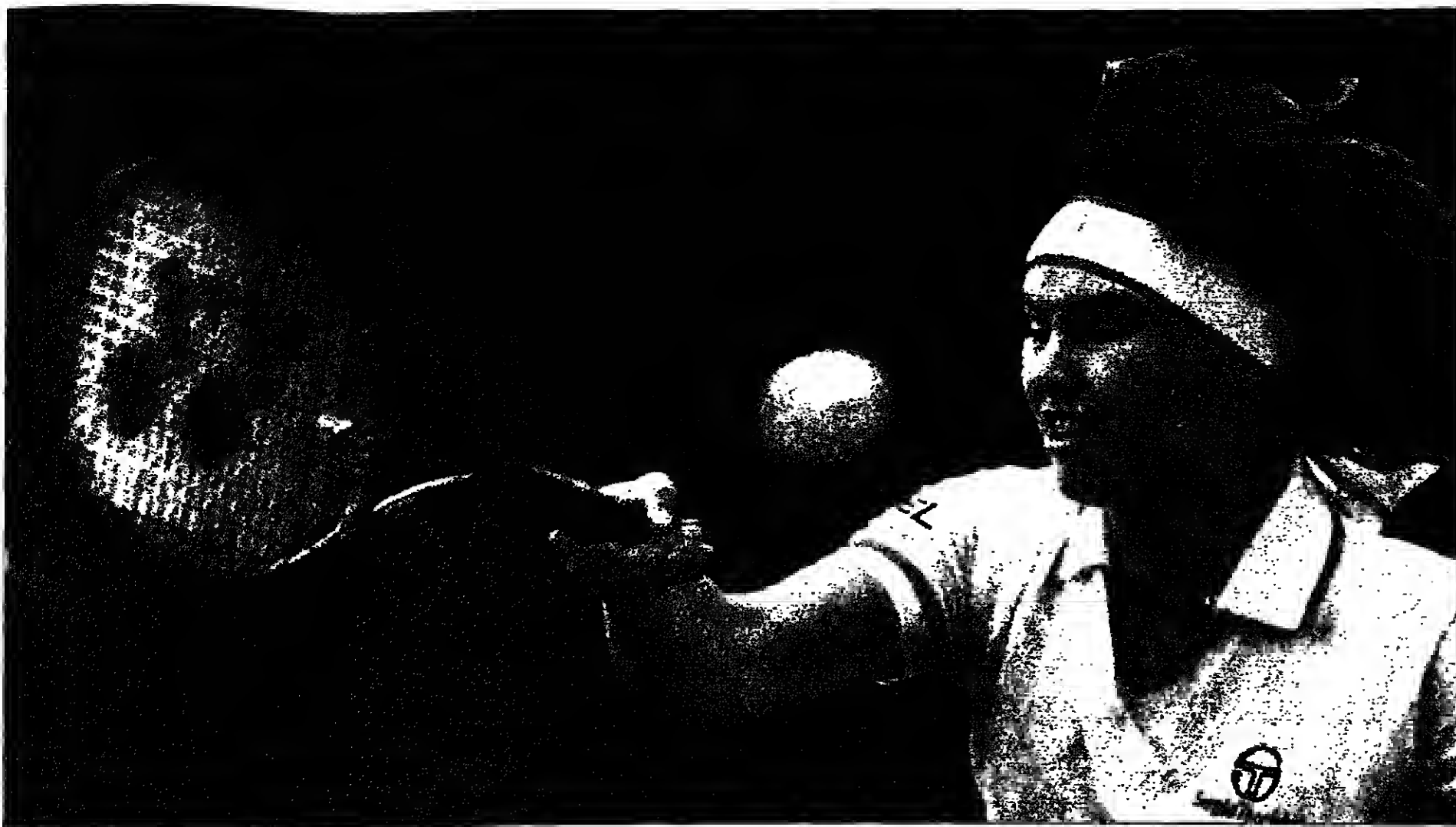
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9.05 E.D.P. BEST FOR

WIMBLEDON 97



Martina Hingis, the No 1 seed from Switzerland, powers a backhand during her straight-sets victory over Sabine Appelmans, of Belgium

Photograph: David Ashdown

American eagle comes under threat

No sooner have we jettisoned the "What's gone wrong with British tennis" stories than another nation is going through a bout of worried introspection. This may not have you weeping into your cereal this morning but the Americans are suffering.

Take a look at the Wimbledon singles and you can see why. There is just one American left, a certain Pete Sampras. And while it would not exactly be a surprise if he was lifting the Renshaw Cup for the fourth time in five years on Sunday, it would merely camouflage an ailing nation.

The statistics tell the story of the flagging Stars and Stripes. In 1983, there were 32 American men in Wimbledon's second round, this year just six made it, three fewer than the previous low in the open era. The women's cupboard is bare. Take away Martina Navratilova, a Czech who became a naturalised American, and the last one to win Wimbledon was Chris Evert in 1981. Old glory, indeed.

Tennis doesn't seem to be exciting too many fans in the United States. Lindsay Davenport, the American fifth seed who flopped in the second round, said: "People aren't playing the sport and they're not watching it right now too much, either. What do you do to change that? I don't know."

Most of the players that have come up through the States in the past have been from at least middle-class fam-

ilies. Something has to be done to help the people who don't have the money.

Which, according to people who follow the game, is precisely the problem. "Ask me what's wrong with American tennis," Hubert Missell, of Florida's *St Petersburg Times*, said, "and I'll give you a two-word answer: Michael Jordan. Kids want to play basketball, baseball or American football. Tennis comes a long way down."

Art Spander, of the *Oakland Tribune*, added: "Most of our top sportsmen these days are black and they see no brothers, as they'd put it, playing the game at top level. If anything it's golf they are being attracted to, thanks to Tiger Woods."

"The system does not help."

Guy Hodgson on the worrying lack of top-flight player material coming through from the United States

In basketball, Jordan is talking to the media 82 times a year, which projects the sport. I'm told Pete Sampras is a great guy but you can't get near him to find out.

Admittedly, the American impact on Wimbledon 1997 has been diluted by injuries to Andre Agassi, Todd Martin and Mali'Val Washington but even if they were here, they could not bridge the generation gap that is worrying US tennis. None of their men in the top 100 is under 24 and apart from the 20-year-old, 6ft 5in, Justin

Gimelstob, who is 117 in the world, the future looks barren. Among the juniors, they have just three boys in the top 50. 19th-ranked Rudolf Rake the highest. In the junior boys' doubles, there is not one American in the top 50. Britain has five.

So where have the people who flocked to see John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors gone? The impact of the charismatic but brutish duo had a twinged impact. "They brought people in to watch tennis," Spander said, "but a lot of

them weren't real fans. As soon as McEnroe and Connors had gone they were lost to the sport."

They turned a lot of people off, too. The stamping around and the anger had a lot of people looking elsewhere for their sport. "You can only speculate how many of the deterred came from the American middle-classes, the natural constituency for budding tennis players."

Richie Reneberg could have embodied the American problems yesterday. A distinguished doubles player, the 31-year-old defeated only his fourth seed in Grand Slam singles when he ousted Carlos Moya in the second round. He arrived on No 1 Court wearing a tatty bandage

on his left knee, feeling unwell. Given the way Greg Rusedski was banging the ball past him, he could have been suffering from shell shock.

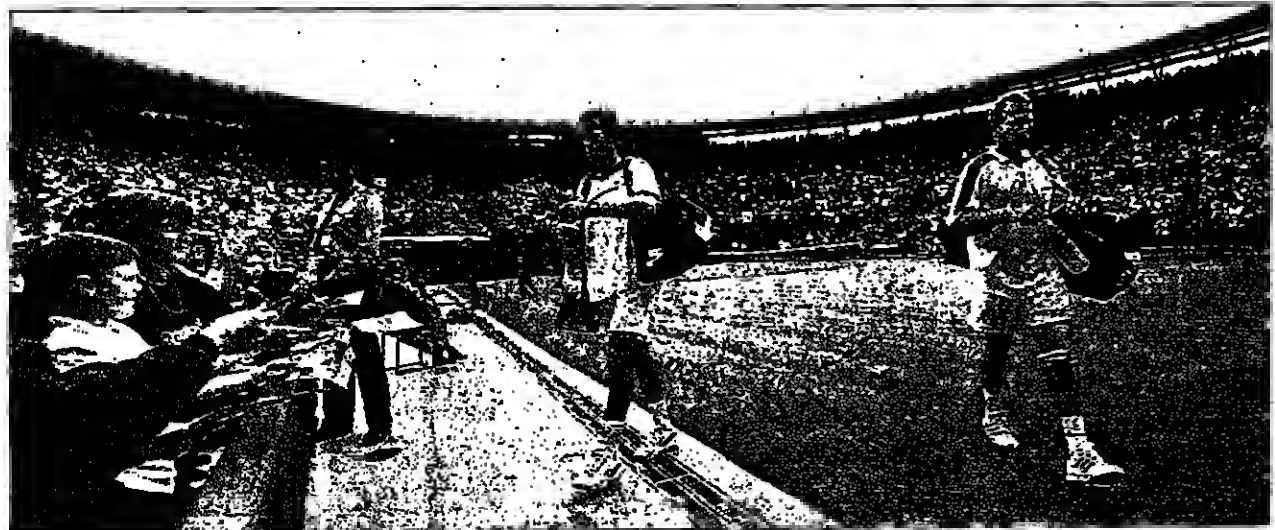
Not once did he have a break point against Rusedski, not once did he look likely to progress to the quarter-finals. The shock would have been the American beating the Brit: the world has gone upside down.

"I don't know that embarrassment is the right word," Reneberg said, "but there's definitely a concern among American players and among a lot of people at the USTA [United States Tennis Association]. There are not a lot of good people coming up."

"There's a bit of a drought coming over Sampras and Agassi and these guys finish. It's not the next year or two people are worried about, it's five or six years down the line." Five years down there were three American men's semi-finalists, this time there will be a maximum of one.

US, as in useless, hardly sits well with a country that used to dominate the sport and a special committee chaired by the former USTA president Bob Cookson is investigating all aspects of American player development and is due to report before the US Open.

One fact ought to give the USTA nightmares. Britain, tennis weaklings for decades, got four men to the third round at Wimbledon. The United States managed three.



Richey Reneberg (right) troops off after defeat by Britain's Greg Rusedski yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Jensens' disappearing act

The colourful doubles act that is the brothers Jensen, Murphy and Luke, arrived at Wimbledon this year with the firm intention of staying a while.

With Murphy's disappearing act a couple of years a hint on the Americans' copybook - he "went fishing" without telling his mother, brother or doubles-partner, Brenda Schultz-McCarthy - they were keen to make a more lasting impression on Monday.

However, their stay lasted little more than two hours before losing in the first round to the seventh-seeded Australians Mark Philippoussis and Pat Rafter. 4-6, 6-3, 6-1.

From the moment the doubles teams walked on the court, it was obvious who the crowd favoured. Not the Americans. Instead, hundreds of teenage girls in every corner of the stands could be heard whistling

and screaming, "c'mon, Pat" or "let's go, Mark" between every point.

Seemingly unconcerned, the Jensens got off to a good start, taking the first set after breaking Philippoussis' service in the fifth game.

The Jensens were notably courteous with the hall-boys, saying "thanks, dude" after every ball they received. Luke, who is ambidextrous, often switched hands in the middle of a service game. At set point in the first set, the brothers bumped chests after Murphy put away a hard volley.

The brothers gathered momentum in the second set, but after Luke struck a young spectator with an errant return of serve, the brothers seemed to tense up. Luke went over to the girl and apologised, and later brought her a Wimbledon towel as a souvenir.

Over the next few games, the Jensens stopped their tomfoolery, opting instead for a more conservative approach to the match. Which, however, is not what they are about, and the Jensens were quickly back to their chattering and horsing around.

The two Australians broke Luke's serve in the sixth game and quickly took the set after holding consecutive service games. In the third set, the Jensens were broken again and Rafter was soon serving for the match at 5-4.

Even turning his shirt inside out for the final game did not help Luke.

With the Jensens gone, the lack of characters at Wimbledon this year is even more apparent. Andre Agassi, the vibrant Las Vegas, is absent and it is not only female fans missing him: Pete Sampras, the No 1 seed, would also like to see him back in SW19.

Sampras, who is seeking a fourth Wimbledon triumph, said: "Andre's absence really hurts the game. He is one of the most popular players and brought a lot of attention to the game. We definitely need him."

"When I played Andre quite a bit a couple of years ago he made me a better player. It was exciting walking out with him for the US Open final. It was one of the few times I really felt the electricity from the crowd and the media."

"So you kind of want that challenge and rivalry that can get you up and going. Andre is obviously missed but the longer you are out the tougher it is to come back. He has the talent and the game, it is just getting it back together."

Simon O'Hagan



QUOTES OF THE DAY

"I told her after the match, 'Well, I've got two more matches to go, so I want to keep it short. That's why I played so well.' Martina Hingis, after beating Sabine Appelmans."

"She's just a little bit better than most of us. She's the No 1 player in the world. I think without that attitude, maybe she wouldn't get so far. Appelmans dismisses suggestions that Hingis's comments were arrogant."

"Nobody saw me as a favourite at the beginning of the tournament but I got through pretty easily until now. I'm improving every match. I feel pretty good. The draw doesn't look too bad for me. Hingis."

"Well, it was lunchtime. I only know that the people who were there were tremendous and gave me so much support. Greg Rusedski, asked about the sparse attendance for his win over Richey Reneberg."

"I think it was one of the best matches I've ever served in. Rusedski."

"I'm kind of glad they knocked it down. I've broken my wrist there and had my longest matches in the tournament there. So when they decided to do away with it I didn't complain. Boris Becker on the new No 1 Court."

"I didn't come here relaxed, not expecting anything. I expected to do well and to play well. It has nothing to do with resting. It just has a lot to do with me trying as well as I can in this tournament right now. Michael Stich, who retires at the end of this year, after beating Mark Woodford."

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Men's singles
Holder: R Kiefer (West)

Fourth round
G Rusedski (GB) bt R A Rensborg (US) 7-6 6-4 7-5
C Paine (Fr) bt B Steven (NZ) 3-6 3-6 6-4 7-5
M Stich (Ger) bt M Woodford (Aus) 6-4 6-7 6-3 7-5
B Becker (Ger) bt M Rios (Cze) 6-2 6-2 7-6
T A Woodbridge (Aus) bt P Rafter (Aust) 6-7 6-4 7-6 6-3
D Jagger (GB) bt Y Kafelnikov (Rus) 6-2 7-5 2-6 6-1

Women's singles
Holder: S Graf (Ger)

Fourth round
A Sanchez-Vicario (Sp) bt M Pierce (Fr) 6-4 6-3
M Hingis (Swt) bt S Appelmans (Bel) 6-1 6-3
Y Basku (Indo) bt P Hy-Boulais (Can) 6-0 7-5
N Tauert (Fr) bt P Tassaud (Fr) 4-6 7-5 12-10
O Chiodova (Cz Rep) bt M Vento (Ven) 6-1 6-3

Men's doubles
Holder: M Woodford and T Woodbridge (Aus)

Second round
S Notboom and F Wiber (Neth) bt J Novak and O Ral (Cz Rep) 6-3 3-6 7-5
D Johnson and F Montana (US) bt L Gotsis (GB) and T Nissen (Neth) 6-2 6-7 6-2
S Stolle (Aust) and C Suk (Cz Rep) bt T Krumpholtz (US) and O McPherson (Aus) 6-3 6-4

Women's doubles
Holder: H Sukovic (Cz Rep) and M Hingis (Swt)

Second round
N Tardieu (Fr) and L Wild (US) bt L Gotsis (GB) and P Schuyder (Swt) 6-7 7-6 6-3
A Rusa (Fr) and R Grande (Indo) bt S A Sotell and A Westerman (GB) 6-3 6-4

Third round
G Fernandez (US) and N Zvereva (Bel) bt C Barclay (Aust) and C Wood (GB) 7-5 7-5

Mixed doubles
Holder: C Suk and C Sukovic (Cz Rep)

First round
F Messem and F Peretto (It) bt S E Davis (US) and P Tashiro (Arg) 6-4 6-4

M Bhupathi (Ind) and R Hirani (Japan) bt C J Van Rensburg (SA) and V Williams (US) 6-7 6-3 6-2

G Connell (Can) and L Davenport (US) bt T Kemmer (Neth) and N Van Loxum (Fr) 5-6 6-2 6-2

G Roux (Fr) and L Gotsis (It) bt B Tait (SA) and O Van Rossum (Bel) 6-7 6-3 7-5

K Buresch and B Rittner (Ger) bt J Grahb and O A Grahb (US) 4-6 7-5 13-11

Men's over-35 doubles

Round-robin first round
D Doreilly (US) and D Visser (SA) bt P Stasi and T Smed (Cz Rep) 6-4 3-6 6-1
C Curran and J C Kiek (US) bt B Gilbert and T Mayotte (US) 6-4 6-2

M Bates (GB) and R Kishen (Ind) bt A Krumpholtz and J Amato (Ind) 6-2 5-7 6-4

Men's over-45 doubles

M Ressen and S Stewart (US) bt T Gorman and S Smith (US) 6-1 7-5
J Fild (Chile) and R Suckman (US) bt J Kozak (Cz Rep) and A Westerman (Rus) 6-2 6-1

R C Lutz and R Tanner (US) bt K Rosewall and F Stolle (Aust) 6-1 6-4
N Fraser and A Stone (Aust) bt R Hewitt and F McMillan (SA) 6-3 6-2

O Davidson (Aus) and E Drysdale (SA) bt I Messem (Rom) and T Ocker (Neth) 4-6 6-3 6-4

Women's over-35 doubles

J Dore (GB) and A Smith (US) bt R Cases (US) and S Stone (Neth) 6-2 6-2
L Charles and A Hobbs (GB) bt H Gentry and G Reid (Aust) 6-4 6-4

Boys' singles

First round
G Rusedski (GB) bt R Jageda (Nigeria) 6-3 6-4 6-4
F Anola (Pol) bt O Levant (Fr) 7-5 7-5
L Home (Peru) bt T Dent (US) 6-2 6-3
F Gonzalez (Chile) bt N Querholzer (US) 6-4 6-4

M Grotius (Slovak) bt I Beres (Croat) 3-6 6-3 6-3

S Dacian (GB) bt J Quenas (Dom) 6-4 6-4

M Zewar (Eg) bt A Dulko (Arg) 3-6 6-3 6-4
K Ziv (ISR) bt A Derapasso (Rus) 7-6 6-4

Girls' singles
First round
A Sobova (Slovak) bt S Turner (GB) 7-5 6-4
A Garam (Aust) bt B Moutassine (Mor) 7-6 7-6

Court circular

Historic moment for Basuki

Yesterday, out on Court Four and probably before the majority of visitors had even purchased their ground tickets, a little piece of history was being made.

Yayuk Basuki's 6-0, 7-6 fourth round win over Patricia Hy-Boulais of Canada marked the first time that an Indonesian player has ever reached the quarter-finals of the women's singles event at Wimbledon.

Football is the most popular sport in Indonesia and the number of ranked players reflect this bias. Basuki is one of only nine female players to hold a world ranking and while she enjoys being the world No 26, her nearest national rival is a massive 350 places behind her.

A spokesman from the Indonesian High Commission said

that although an Indonesian used to be the Asian title No 1, he could not bring to mind a professional Indonesian player currently competing in the men's game.

Basuki, from Jakarta, said of her win: "For me, this is something special. Hopefully my country is proud of me."

To put Yayuk's mind at rest, the High Commission has confirmed that "The Indonesian people are very proud of Yayuk's achievement. It is very hard to compete in Wimbledon today, but we are not too surprised by her success because she often beats top-ranked players."

If Yayuk continues winning, Indonesian fans will probably be able to watch her live on TV - presumably as long as it doesn't clash with a football match.



Nicola Pietrangeli, the 19-year-old German, goes flat out to beat Yevgeny Kafelnikov yesterday

Photograph: Empics

Oh I say, Vijay

Vijay Amritraj was always a bit of a smoothie - he was the perfect urbane match for Roger Moore in *Octopussy* in 1983 - so it's not surprising that he is a fervent admirer of the late Dan Maskell.

Amritraj, the former Indian Davis Cup player who graced many a Wimbledon and is now a television commentator himself, could not have paid the Voice of Tennis a bigger compliment than by copying his style.

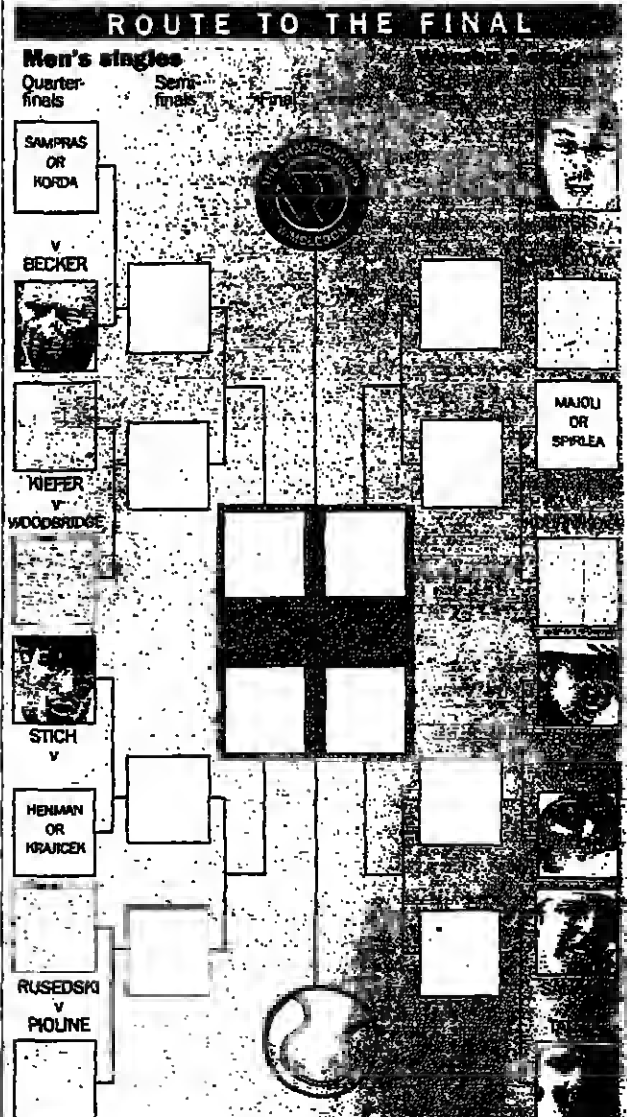
The perennially smiling Indian, who used to take opponents by surprise by applauding their winners, says: "I always thought



Maskell Amritraj

Dan was easily the best television commentator. He had this endearing habit of saying 'Oh, I say' when something spectacular happened. It summed up a great shot far better than someone going on and on about it."

"So now I'm an 'Oh, I say' man myself. I know Dan would not mind."



THE NUMBERS GAME

- 13 The games Arantxa Sanchez Vicario has lost in her four matches to date
- 3 The double faults Greg Rusedski serves in his match against Richey Reneberg
- 175 The places Britain's Karen Cross is expected to climb in the rankings after her excellent run
- 1624 The time play was resumed after rain on Tuesday
- 1635 The time play was suspended when the rain clouds opened again on Tuesday
- 1887 The year Wimbledon's youngest stages champion Little Dot won the ladies' singles competition

TODAY'S WEATHER

Generally cloudy with showers expected Maximum temperature

Game set and watch.

ROLEX

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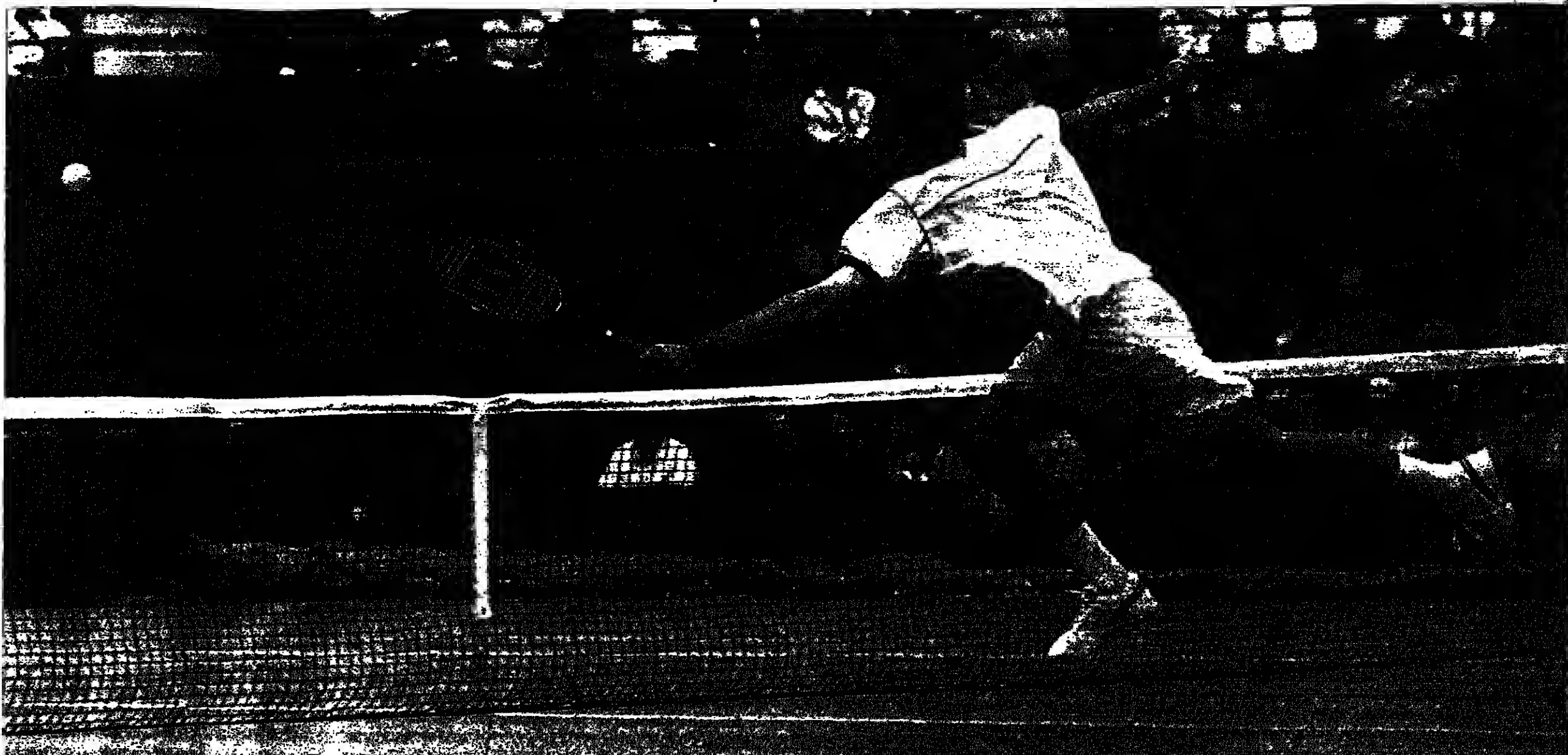


Lions' stampede
Record result for British Isles
against Free Staters, page 28

sport

Bard of Wales
Robert Croft and the art of Test
match off-spin bowling, page 28

WIMBLEDON '97: British No 2 reaches Grand Slam quarter-final for the first time as Becker leads the German charge



Full stretch: Greg Rusedski, the British No 2, extends his game to reach a place in the quarter-finals by beating the American Richey Reneberg in a rain-interrupted match at Wimbledon yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Rusedski rises to the grand occasion

JOHN ROBERTS
Tennis Correspondent



The dream continues. Greg Rusedski assured his adoptive Britain of a place in the men's singles quarter-finals for a second consecutive year and added to America's woes by defeating Richey Reneberg, 7-6, 6-4, 7-6.

The Canadian-born British No 2 now meets the experienced Frenchman Cedric Pioline for a place in the semi-finals. The last Briton to achieve that was Yorkshire's Roger Taylor, who lost to Bjorn Borg.

Rusedski is linked with Yorkshire inasmuch as his mother was born in Dewsbury, but there can be little doubt of his commitment to the national cause since his transfer from Montreal in 1995.

No sooner did he arrive than he embraced the flag, winning a place in the last 16, at which point he was defeated by Pete Sampras.

On this occasion, Rusedski hopes to enjoy an extended

run. "I've got a difficult match against Cedric Pioline," he said. "It's his third time in the quarters. He returns extremely well, and I think he's going to mix it up, stay back and come in, and do a bit of everything."

"It's going to depend on how well I serve and how well I return. I have to return a little bit sharper than I did today, and I am going to have to hit my ground shots and work the point a bit more."

Rusedski was far happier at his work than during Saturday's second-round match against another American, Jonathan Stark. Worried by a nagging back injury, Rusedski vented his frustrations on the umpire after a disputed call.

Sunday's straight-sets victory against Andrew Richardson, a compatriot, set the tone for yesterday's performance. "I think I was better focused," Rusedski said.

"My back was really sore on Saturday, and I wasn't in such a good mood. My physio has done a tremendous job, and I'm feeling very good. You have those days where you're not always

playing your best tennis, and sometimes you do silly things out there to get yourself going."

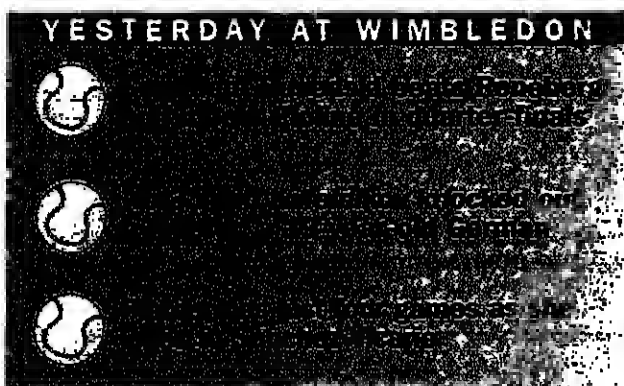
"I'm pleased I took advantage of the situation today. I think that was one of the best matches I've ever served."

Rusedski barely had time to loosen his left arm before drizzle forced the players back to the locker-room for 17 minutes, after which the British No 2's serving was as relentless as Friday's rain.

He hit 32 aces, a total of 61 service winners, and won 90 per cent of the points on his first deliveries. His volleys were pretty fair, too, 15 of them producing winners.

Although Reneberg managed to save the solitary breakpoint in the opening set, improvising a defensive drop-volley in the sixth game, he was overwhelmed in the tie-break, 7-2, feeding Rusedski encouragement he scarcely required by double-faulting to 1-5.

An impressive return by Rusedski tilted the second set his way on his second breakpoint at 2-2, and he secured the two-set lead after 74 minutes



with an ace on the first set-point.

Reneberg might have begun to despair of ever cracking the Rusedski serve after being bamboozled by three aces and a service winner in the fourth game of the third set, by which time a similarity in the pattern of points may have lulled some spectators into a midday slumber.

If so, they would have been

rudely awakened by one of the biggest cheers of the match, in response to a splendid catch by a woman in pink when a ball was deflected high into the stands off the frame of a racket. A luminous green plastic bracelet suggested that the spectator was a happy camper from the overnight queue, and her dexterity brightened the day.

The only time Rusedski appeared to be in the remotest danger of being extended beyond straight sets was when he was taken to deuce at 5-6, Reneberg reading a second serve to his backhand and driving it across the court. He then netted a return and scarcely saw the ace with which Rusedski guaranteed a second tie-break.

Reneberg missed a forehand to put his opponent at 5-4 with two serves to come. The American returned one of them over the baseline, Rusedski finishing the job on the first match-point with an ace off a second serve.

This was greeted by an explosion of cheering. Unlucky Jacks of various sizes materialising as it dawned on the crowd that another Brit had become a member of the Last Eight Club.

Had Rusedski noticed the empty seats early in the match? "I didn't really," he said. "The

crowd that came to watch the match were terrific. They were very supportive. And, I mean, it's lunch hour, 12 noon, so I guess they're off to lunch." Some might even be out to lunch if the success story continues.

"I'm very pleased to be in the quarter-finals, but I don't want to stop here," Rusedski said. "This, hopefully, is just the beginning."

Boris Becker, defeated the Chilean Marcelo Rios, seeded one place below him at No 9, to head a trio of victorious Germans into the last eight. The other two are unseeded.

Michael Stich we know. He defeated Becker to win the title in 1991.

The other one, Nicolas Pietrangeli, we are likely to learn much more about as time goes by. Duc to celebrate his 30th birthday on Saturday, and ranked No 98 in the world, he eliminated the third-seeded

Yevgeny Kafelnikov, 6-2, 7-5, 2-6, 6-1.

Two years ago, Kiefer was the runner-up in the junior singles. Two weeks ago he played Kafelnikov for the first time, on a grass court at Halle, and was beaten, 7-6, 7-6.

Yesterday, the Russian found himself two sets in arrears before he was able to make an impression. Kiefer, unlike Tim Henman in the first round last year, did not allow Kafelnikov's prospects of a revival to linger much longer than the third set.

Kiefer's reward is a quarter-final against Australia's Todd Woodbridge, who defeated a compatriot, the 12th-seeded Pat Rafter, 6-7, 6-4, 7-6, 6-3.

Stich who is playing his last Grand Slam tournament, defeated Australia's Mark Woodforde, 6-4, 6-7, 6-3, 7-5.

More reports, Results, page 30

Sanchez Vicario and Hingis on cruise control

RICHARD EDMONDSON



The person who suggested two months ago that the Wimbledon ladies' singles final would be contested by Martina Hingis and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario was until recently being held, for his own safety, in secure quarters minus his shoelaces. Now that he is out perhaps he will be able to enjoy Saturday's contest.

Before the French Open, Hingis and Sanchez Vicario was not the obvious match-up for SW19. The Swiss Miss was still recovering from arthroscopic surgery on her left knee while the Spaniard was playing with the sort of alacrity that makes you want to throw at least your rackets off Beachy Head. Times have changed. Both advanced to the quarter-finals by similar scores, 6-1, 6-3, yesterday, and there was a certain symmetry also in the commendation they received from the vanquished.

Hingis has been walking unnoticed in the crowd to the courts this week inside the camouflage of a hooded sweatshirt, but there is no disguising her growing potency. In the first set against Belgium's Sabine Appelmans, the No 1 seed produced the best Wimbledon has seen of her. In the second, there was only the slightest slackening in her intensity. The match ended with an outrageously delicate return of service which appeared to land on chewing gum.

"Her game is suited for every court," Appelmans said. "She has very good hands at the net, she plays an aggressive game and she can do so much with the balls. She can do as well here as in the other Grand Slams. There's not so much I could

have done differently today. She was just better and she's only 16 so I'm sure she can still improve. She has a very complete game but if she gets more power, she can maybe hit the ball even harder. Other players, like Graf and Seles, really have to work hard around the court, but everything seems so easy for Martina. She's always in the right position and it doesn't look like she has to work very hard on court. That's the difference from the other players. She's unique."

Hingis was so cool and assured throughout that she looked on the verge of boredom. "Nobody saw me as a favourite at the beginning of the tournament but I've got through pretty easily until now," she said. Not as easily, however, as Sanchez Vicario, who has lost seven fewer games thus far at 13.

The match between the former world No 1 and Mary Pierce was scheduled on Centre Court as the appetiser before Boris and Tim. Empty seats speckled the auditorium, and the Royal Box looked like Versailles just after the Republicans had knocked on the door. It was 12.45 before the King and Queen of Malaysia, Sir Greville and Lady Spratt and friends took to their seats.

They plunged themselves into the micro-climate of an arena in which the surface suffers because of poor air circulation. An inverted T of khaki earth. From the baseline to the service line, has now been scored on the turf.

Sanchez Vicario turned up for duty minus her small-of-the-back half-bolder, but Pierce at least provided the reliable box of tricks. She smiles at such strange times that you could imagine her guffawing at a cremation. The French woman ranged between despondency

and high amusement at the hattering she was taking. It was a contest of Sanchez's guile and Pierce's muscle and in this chess game the latter was swiftly established as the pawn. The Spaniard shrewdly slowed down her opponent, and was particularly keen to let Pierce dwell on the loss of key points. In addition, she predicted the serve so consistently it appeared a recording of the match had already found its way into her possession.

After a first set which occupied just 21 minutes, there was an anticipation that Pierce, like Montserrat, would burst into devastating life. She rallied briefly, producing smashes that threatened to produce craters, but was then guilty of pressing too hard. It was over in less than an hour.

Sanchez Vicario has been in the last two finals and as the figure that has derailed her on both occasions, Steffi Graf, is now in the workshop, it appears restoration may soon be complete. "At the beginning of the year I went through a very tough moment and it's been very hard," she said. "But now everything has started going better for me. It's a great win for me today and it gives me great confidence."

So too will the words of the runner-up. "She played a great match," Pierce said. "She seemed very motivated. Definitely the way she was playing she'll be tough to beat. She brings a lot of balls back and she actually served pretty well and hit some good passing shots. Those are important shots on grass."

Pierce further attributed her defeat to a damaged arm, and a mysterious state from which she cannot really have been suffering. "I didn't feel very into the match," she said. "I was a little tired." Tired, Mary, is what nurses feel at the end of a shift.

MORSE



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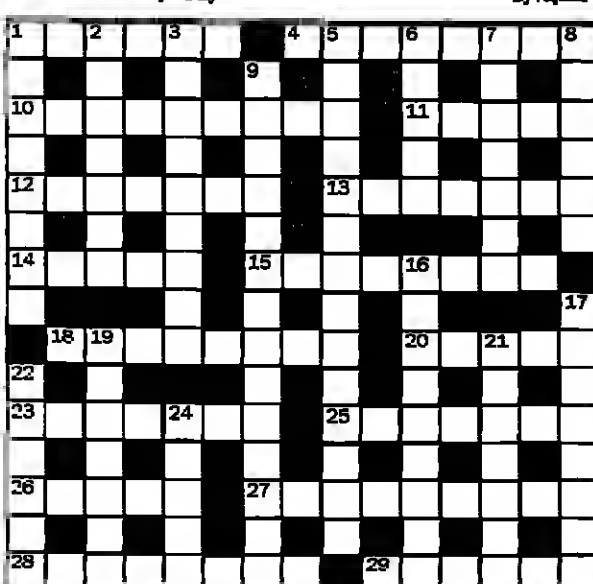
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ACROSS

- Alarm when springtime comes to the underworld (6)
- A lady's undergarment is on the wrong way — there is chafing (8)
- Sliding scale for trombonists (9)
- German folklorist, sinister, with male following (5)
- Intimate girl puts on a little weight (8)
- How team's beaten? Rather! (8)

DOWN

- Shadow over eye for two hours aboard ship (8)
- Cheese unnaturally high with this? (7)
- Such conviction covers life (9)

INSTRUCTIONS TO DEFENDER ON FIELD, LIFTING GEAR? (5,3,6)

- Boring thing to predict, we hear (5)
- Senseless, like Hamlet's life-story (7)
- Calling with North American porcelain? (6)
- A perfect budget for an Oscar presentation (2,5,7)
- Neat dude until shaken up (9)
- Sticks on pitch, a centre of attraction (8)
- Month at work for an ink manufacturer (7)
- Bait men throw out, creating relaxing atmosphere (7)
- A born leader profits by exploits (6)
- The French hail-and-farewell (5)

Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canals Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans, Herts. Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 01938 840570. Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office.

سكرا من الاصل